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Local Kauaʻi News by Wilma Lee Kapp
2024 - Quarter 1 – January – February - March**

Local Kauaʻi News – Tuesday January 2, 2024

The Hawaiʻi Department of Transportation (HDOT) notifies highway users of a full nightly closure of Kūhiō Highway (Route 560) between Hanalei Plantation Road and Ohiki Road beginning Tuesday, Jan. 2, 2024, for the Hanalei Bridge Repair project. After the initial week, closures will continue nightly on a Sunday-through-Thursday schedule from 11 p.m. to 5:30 a.m. the following day. The \$2.9 million project will replace the timber decking, steel bolts, and corroded steel members of Hanalei Bridge. The steel structure of the bridge will be prepared and repainted. The closures will continue Sunday through Thursday nights through the projected completion of the project in February.

A stretch of Kuamoʻo Road has been designated as a traffic emergency zone because of signs of slope failure near the popular Opaekaʻa Falls Scenic Lookout, the Hawaiʻi Department of Transportation said. The plan of actions calls for the installation of a reinforced shotcrete wall of which the height and length is to be determined. The action plan also notes the project duration to be dependent on the size of the wall. The single lane closure will be in effect 24 hours a day, seven days a week, until further notice. Motorists have reported significant traffic issues along the road because of the project.

Two Honolulu police officers are seriously wounded and a suspect is dead after a shootout near the University of Hawaii at Manoa. The officers were rushed into surgery after the shootout with the 44-year-old man, which happened at about four o'clock Monday afternoon. The suspect was killed by officers. A fourth man was injured by a police vehicle, but it's not clear how or if he was involved in the incident. A dayslong manhunt for the suspect intensified late Monday morning, when he was spotted driving a stolen car in Kalihi. The HPD says he shot at plainclothes officers who were trying to arrest him. The man got away then stole another car at gunpoint in Windward Oahu.

- Eight people, including three children, are injured after New Year's fireworks mishaps on Oahu. Jim Ireland, the director of Honolulu Emergency Medical Services, says six of those injuries are severe, disfiguring, and likely life-changing. Ireland says the injuries range from the loss of a limb to the permanent loss of vision in an eye. Honolulu firefighters also responded to 23 fires, nearly triple the amount from last year's New Year's celebrations. At least eight of the fires were structure fires and at least three others were brush fires.

Several new laws take effect with the start of the New Year today. The statewide minimum wage is now increased to 14-dollars an hour. As of today, Hawaii now requires new marriage certificates be issued to those who request to change their gender assigned at birth. Effective today, residents cannot carry guns in sensitive locations and on private property without prior knowledge of the owner.

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Local Kaua*ʻ*i News – Wednesday January 3, 2024

The Hawaii Department of Law Enforcement has confirmed a bomb threat was emailed to certain members of the Senate relating to explosives being placed at the Hawai'i State Capitol Building. The Sheriffs Division was contacted at about 6:40 a.m. HST today. The Hawai'i State Capitol was evacuated and the building was searched by deputies along with its Special Operations explosive detection K-9 units. No explosives device or material was found. The Capitol was reopened at approximately 9:30 a.m. upon the completion of the search. Similar threats have been sent to multiple State Capitol buildings across the country.

The president of the University of Hawaii is declining to say whether or not he had been drinking before he hit a parked car early Monday morning. It happened after president David K. Lassner had left a New Year's Eve dinner. He veered right to avoid oncoming traffic and hit the parked car, flipping his Toyota Rav4. Luckily no one was hurt in the accident. Police said that Lassner was "coordinated and coherent" and given a breathalyzer test.

On Oahu An attempted murder investigation is underway following an overnight crash in Makiki that left a moped rider in serious condition. According to HPD, a 50-year-old male suspect was chasing the male victim in his vehicle and apparently struck the moped on purpose, ejecting the victim onto the roadway. The 35-year-old moped rider was taken to a nearby hospital in serious condition. Investigators said the suspect and victim are acquaintances.

Hawaii saw a spike in invasive species reports made in 2023. More than 18-hundred reports were filed during the year. In each of the previous ten years, there had been less than 900. A thousand of last year's reports were just for coconut rhinoceros beetles. The beetles started on Oahu, then spread to Kauai in the summer, then appeared on Maui and the Big Island later in the year.

Honolulu is officially the first major U.S. city requiring Narcon at businesses that sell alcohol. The law requiring bars, nightclubs, restaurants and other businesses to have the nasal spray, also known as Narcan, took effect on Monday with the start of the new year. The spray can reverse the effects of a potentially deadly opioid overdose, such as from fentanyl. Honolulu has about 870 alcohol-serving businesses.

New information is emerging about the man who was killed by Honolulu police in a shootout that also left two officers wounded. The HPD now says the 44-year-old man was armed with an unregistered AR-15 style assault rifle on Monday. And, the woman who the man allegedly shot and seriously injured as she was driving on the Moanalua Freeway in the morning has been identified as the suspect's ex-girlfriend. The man shot at police four separate times in different locations on Oahu as they tried to arrest him during the course of about ten hours. He also carjacked a person in Windward Oahu at gunpoint. The two officers who were shot remain hospitalized. The woman who was shot is expected to survive.

Two men and a woman have pleaded not guilty to murder and robbery charges after a deadly shooting in Mililani. The suspects all entered their pleas on Tuesday. They are behind bars in

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connection with the death of a man who was gunned down as he sat in his car on Kamehameha Highway on December 14th. A judge has denied a request to lower the alleged shooter's one-million-dollar bail.

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Local Kauaī News – Thursday January 4, 2024

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Local Kaua*ʻ*i News – Friday January 5, 2024

Kauai experienced an island-wide power outage on Thursday afternoon. Kauai Island Utility Cooperative says a transformer failed at the Port Allen Generating Station. That happened at about 2:15 p.m. Most customers saw their power come back in about an hour and a half. There was still some lingering, scattered outages more than two hours later.

Bomb threats that led to the evacuations of three state courthouses in Hawaii are unfounded. On Thursday morning, emailed bomb threats mentioned explosives being placed inside courthouses in Kapolei, Honolulu and in Lihue. Police swept the courthouses and found nothing suspicious. A mass email that included a bomb threat was sent to courthouses across the nation on Thursday. Investigators believe the same person or entity that sent bomb threats to several state capitols on Wednesday, including Hawaii's, is responsible. The threat to the state capitol was also deemed a hoax.

The son of famed hair stylist Paul Mitchell has been found dead in Honolulu. Angus Mitchell was found dead in the pool at his home in the Diamond Head area on Wednesday morning. The cause of death is not clear, but police do not suspect foul play. It's not clear if anyone else was home at the time of Mitchell's death. He was 53-years-old.

The so-called "Master of Disguise" is pleading not guilty in his first appearance in a Hawaii courtroom after spending years at large. Tyler Adams was originally arrested in 2019 on charges of first- and second-degree theft, but disappeared after he didn't return from a work furlough. His girlfriend has since been found dead in Mexico and Adams has been wanted for questioning. Adams, who the FBI said had assumed more than a dozen aliases and numerous disguises, was arrested in California and extradited to Hawaii. He entered his plea through video from his prison cell block and a judge increased Adams' bail from 50 to 100-thousand-dollars. A trial date has been set for March 4th.

An inmate is dead after an apparent drug overdose at Hawaii Community Correctional Center in Hilo. The man was one of two inmates who needed emergency medical attention in their cell on Thursday afternoon. The other inmate survived. Jail staff tried to revive the first inmate with Narcan. An autopsy has been scheduled to determine an exact cause of death.

After another barrage of fireworks and fireworks-related injuries on New Year's Eve, Hawaii lawmakers are once again discussing a bill. The fireworks-related bill was rolled over from last year's legislative session. It would create a shipping container inspection program designed to find illegal fireworks that make it to Hawaii's ports. Last year, the bill was referred to three committees, but never got a hearing. The 2024 legislative session starts on January 17th.

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Local Kaua'i News – Monday January 8, 2024

The Kauai Department of Motor Vehicles continues to experience connectivity issues to its main database. So officials are announcing that the DMV is unable to process any DMV transactions at this time. All appointments are currently being rescheduled. Customers are encouraged to use online or kiosk services for motor vehicle registrations.

Hawaii State Department of Health Clean Water Branch wants you to know that A Brown Water Advisory has been issued for Southwest Kaua'i (from Poipu to Polihale) and Kalapaki Beach Park. Heavy rain has resulted in stormwater runoff entering into coastal waters. You are advised to stay out of flood waters and storm water runoff due to possible overflowing cesspools, sewer, manholes, pesticides, animal fecal matter, dead animals, pathogens, chemicals, and associated flood debris. Not all coastal areas may be impacted by runoff, however, if the water is brown stay out.

The Kaua'i Fire Department's search for a possible missing swimmer in waters off Kapa'a Beach Park was suspended at approximately 11:20 a.m. on Saturday after a bystander reported seeing someone in distress at approximately 5:30 p.m. Friday. Officials have confirmed that the swimmer they had been searching for was located and is safe. The man was not missing nor was he in distress while swimming Friday afternoon. Officials thank the public for their assistance.

A midair emergency with an Alaska Airlines plane in Oregon is having a ripple effect across the Pacific in Hawaii. Several flights have been delayed or otherwise impacted after the FAA grounded about 170 Boeing 737 Max 9 jetliners. At least 15 flights to and from Hawaii were cancelled on Saturday, with at least nine more canceled on Sunday. Some travelers have been told it will be several days before they can leave Hawaii. The FAA is investigating after an Alaska Airlines plane's door plug fell out shortly after takeoff from Portland on Friday.

After years of delays, the trial of suspected Oahu crime boss Michael Miske begins today with jury selection. Federal authorities arrested the longtime business owner more than three years ago. About a dozen of his former co-defendants have already agreed to plea deals. The case may involve more than 900 witnesses. Among his many alleged crimes, Miske is accused of obstruction of justice and witness tampering. Some potential jurors have expressed concerns about their safety and the safety of their families. The trial involves Miske and his two remaining co-defendants - - his half-brother and a woman who was married to his late son, Caleb.

Police are investigating an alleged axe attack in Honolulu. A witness claimed to see a man brutally attacking his friend with an axe over the weekend. The victim was rushed to the emergency room in serious condition, according to Honolulu Emergency Medical Services. A suspect was taken into custody and then later released as the investigation continues.

Officials are explaining why thousands of letters were seen scattered across the H-1 Freeway over the weekend. The U.S. Postal Service told Hawaii News Now those letters were just "junk mail" en route to be recycled. A recycling contractor truck somehow lost the mail.

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Local Kauaï News – Tuesday January 9, 2024

ON Oahu More than half of the potential jurors in the Mike Miske trial have already been ruled out. On Monday, the first day of jury selection, 19 potential jurors were interviewed individually by attorneys for both the prosecution and defense. Eleven were dismissed for several reasons, including personal relationships with the witnesses, past experience in law enforcement, or past experiences as victims or witnesses of crimes. Eight potential jurors are still in the running, meaning the prosecution and defense still think they can remain impartial. Miske is facing 22 federal counts related to racketeering and conspiracy. The federal trial started with jury selection on Monday and is expected to last six to eight months.

The Coast Guard and other agencies are responding to sailboard incident in Lahaina. The boat named Aletgo Two ran aground earlier today near the entrance to Lahaina Harbor. All eight of the people on board, including five children, were able to be rescued. The Coast Guard said they're working with the boats owner on salvage efforts. They also said no impact on wildlife has been reported.

A new security measure will be in place at the state capitol when the legislative session begins next week. Crews have finished installing metal detectors at three entrances. Visitors are being told to start expecting screening lines, like at airports, courts and sporting events. The metal detectors cost four-thousand dollars apiece.

Hawaiian Electric has cancelled rolling power outages that left parts of Oahu in the dark on Monday night. The outages, prompted by heavy rains, started in Nuuanu at about eight p.m. and lasted through 10:30 p.m. Each outage lasted about a half hour. HECO says it was dealing with power generation issues and needed to cut some power to prevent larger problems. HECO officials call the outages, which also made traffic lights go dark, an "extraordinary step."

The union representing nurses at Kapiolani Medical Center for Women and Children can now call for a strike whenever it sees fit. With a 96-percent yes vote, unionized nurses have authorized a strike. Hawaii Nurses Association members voted Friday, with the results announced Monday. They have been working without a contract since December 1st. The nurses say they're unhappy with staffing ratios and the progress of contract negotiations.

Maui County police officers have killed a snake that was found in a shipping container on Molokai. The 20-inch long, non-venomous gopher snake was found Monday morning, as the container was being unloaded at a hardware store in Kaunankakai. Officers shot the snake with a pellet gun. The shipping container came from California. State officials arrived to search the area in the afternoon and found no other snakes or evidence of snakes.

Hawaii is in a serious need of workers to do state government civil service jobs. Last month, 27 percent of those positions statewide were vacant. That's according to a new report by the Department of Human Resources Development. State agencies have seen growing vacancies in the past four years. In 2019, before the pandemic, there was a vacancy rate of 18 percent. Last month, it went to

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27 percent. And, vacancies might only continue to grow. The report also says another 30 percent of current state civil service employees will be eligible to retire within the next five years.

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Local Kaua*ʻ*i News – Wednesday January 10, 2024

Alaska Airlines is facing new troubles following a scary incident in which a panel blew out of a plane during a packed flight last week. An Alaska Airlines flight from Everett, Washington, to Honolulu was redirected to Portland on Tuesday due to an issue with its radios. The plane was over the Pacific Ocean when it returned to Portland. Flight 819 was at Portland International Airport for about an hour-and-a-half before resuming its flight to Hawaii. On Friday, the door plug on an Alaska Airlines Boeing 737-9 MAX aircraft blew out during ascent, tearing a passenger's shirt clean off his body.

Alaska Airlines is canceling through Saturday all flights on Boeing 737 Max 9 planes like the one that suffered an in-flight blowout of a fuselage panel last week as it waits for new instructions from Boeing and federal officials on how to inspect the fleet. The Seattle-based airline said today that it would cancel 110 to 150 flights a day while the Max 9 planes remain grounded. By midday, Alaska had canceled about 120 flights — one-fifth of its schedule for the day.

On the Big Island A negligent homicide investigation is underway after a police car struck a teenager. 16-year-old Samuel Mwarey was walking in the road when he was hit by a Big Island police officer on January sixth. Mwarey reportedly wasn't in a marked crosswalk. The teen was taken to Hilo Medical Center in critical condition and died from his injuries on Monday. Officials say the officer who hit Mwarey is an 18-year veteran of the Hawaii Police Department. The officer, who hasn't been identified, has been placed on administrative leave.

Honolulu is nearing a settlement with a man who says he was wrongfully jailed for six months. On Tuesday, a Honolulu City Council Committee recommended the full council approve a settlement to resolve his lawsuit. In January of 2020, the man was arrested on suspicion of stealing a pair of watches from a store in Waikiki. But, the suspect shown on surveillance video had leg tattoos, when the man who was arrested does not. The council may approve the settlement at its next meeting on January 24th.

(Big Island, HI) -- A woman is facing charges after she allegedly stole an elderly man's identity. Officials say 46-year-old Kelli-Rae Souza stole the man's identity and used his credit cards. Police reports allege Souza of making numerous unauthorized transactions that were over four-thousand-dollars from June 13th to September 14th last year. Big Island officials say Souza is facing charges including identity fraud, and if she is found guilty, she could face up to 30 years in prison. Souza was released from custody after posting bail, which was more than 18-thousand-dollars. She expected to make her initial court appearance later this month.

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Local Kauaī News – Thursday January 11, 2024

The founder and CEO of Facebook, now called Meta, is launching a cattle-raising project on Kauai. Billionaire Mark Zuckerberg says he's raising cattle at Ko'olau Ranch to create some of the "highest quality beef." In Wednesday's announcement, Zuckerberg said he's going to exclusively feed his cattle macadamia meal and beer. That would require the planting of several acres of macadamia trees on the property. It's unclear if consumers will be able to buy the Zuckerberg-raised beef.

The water off the coast of Lahaina is brown after this week's heavy rain washed fire-related contaminants into the ocean. The contaminants may be toxic. Scientists collected water samples from off the coast of Lahaina on Wednesday morning. Experts say rain washed fire residue into the ocean, either from the surface at ground level or from underground sources like lava tubes. Lahaina got about four inches of rain between Monday and Wednesday morning. The scope of potential damage to coastal waters and the coral reef ecosystem is not yet clear.

More than 600 registered nurses at Kapiolani Medical Center for Women and Children are planning to walk off the job on January 21st. The Hawaii Nurses Association, armed with a recently approved strike authorization, has called for a strike. There has been no resolution after four months of contract negotiations. Nurses say staffing issues have turned into a safety issue. The strike is scheduled to last a week. The union and hospital officials will have another round of negotiations today.

The two Honolulu police officers who were seriously wounded in a shootout with a murder suspect on New Year's Day are out of the hospital. The officers were released on Wednesday and are now continuing their recovery at home. They were shot in a gun battle with the man in Manoa after a manhunt that lasted several hours and spanned multiple parts of Oahu. The suspect was killed in the shootout. The officers both had to have surgery.

A new security measure will be in place at the state capitol. Crews have finished installing metal detectors at three of the entrances. The metal detectors cost four-thousand dollars apiece. State Representative Gene Ward says he's been pushing for enhanced security measures at the capitol for the past decade. He would also like to see bag checks and more steps taken to protect the outside of the building.

Hawaii is among the U.S. states that will launch a grocery benefits program for children this summer. Through the Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer program, qualifying families in Hawaii can get 120-dollars for each child to buy food at stores, farmer's markets, and other authorized retailers during the summer. This is the program's first year, and more states are expected to join in 2025.

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Local Kauaī News – Friday January 12, 2024

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Local Kauaʻi News – Monday January 15, 2024

The Kauaʻi Police Department is investigating a death-related case after an unidentified body was found following a vehicle fire in Anahola on Friday morning. At approximately 3 a.m. on Friday, firefighters responded to a report of a vehicle fire at Anahola Beach Park. After the fire was fully extinguished, police arrived on scene and discovered an unidentified body located inside the vehicle. The incident remains under police investigation and foul play has not been ruled out. Anyone with information about this incident is urged to call KPD Dispatch at 808-241-1711. Those wishing to remain anonymous can provide information by submitting a tip to Crime Stoppers Kauaʻi at cskauai.org Tipsters may be eligible for up to 1000 dollars in reward money.

Travis Bonachita, 24, of Kōloa, who was wanted by the Kauaʻi Police Department for assaulting a police officer, turned himself in Saturday, Jan. 13 and was arrested without incident on the following offenses based on a warrant: Attempted Assault First Degree, Prohibited Place to Keep Pistol or Revolver, Carrying Loaded Firearm on Highway, Ownership Possession Prohibited, Criminal Property Damage First Degree. Bonachita is currently being held at KPD cellblock with bail set at \$45,000.

Tomorrow, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will begin cleaning up debris from burned homes in Lahaina. It follows the removal of toxic and hazardous materials from properties, which was handled by the EPA. Residents will have to complete a right of entry before crews can begin clearing their properties. About 15-hundred applications have been received, and about 700 have already been approved. Without a right of entry, homeowners will have to hire a private contractor to clean up their properties.

Maui County is offering landowners money for each deer they kill. People will get 50 bucks per axis deer they take down. Maui County's axis deer population is estimated at 18-thousand, down from an estimated 60-thousand in 2022. The deer have been a nuisance to many residents and business owners for several years. They are known to eat crops and grasses meant for cattle and often wander into neighborhoods looking for more food.

Bills aimed at tackling Hawaii's feral chicken problem will once again be reviewed by the state legislature. Last year, the House and Senate each considered a bill that would establish a chicken complaint hotline. The bills rolled over to this year's legislative session, which starts Wednesday. Another House bill would require the State Department of Health to establish a feral chicken complaint hotline while also setting up more chicken traps. Another House bill would impose a 500-dollar fine on people who feed or try to feed feral chickens.

- Help is here for families struggling to send their little ones to preschool in Hawaii. The Department of Human Services is expanding on its Preschool Open Doors program to include eligible three-year-olds. The department is also raising its gross income eligibility limits. That means more families will qualify for assistance with preschool tuition. These changes will go into effect for the 2024-2025 school year.

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Local Kauaʻi News – Tuesday January 16, 2024

The Kauaʻi Police Department has identified a 30-year-old male who died at Hanakāpīʻai Falls in Hāʻena on Sunday, Jan. 14, as Matthew Wu of New York. According to a preliminary report, first responders received a report of a male falling off Hanakāpīʻai Falls Trail at approximately 11:45 a.m. Sunday. The hiker apparently fell off the trail and was located approximately 30 feet below Hanakāpīʻai Falls. Personnel with the Kauaʻi Fire Department and Air 1 assisted in recovering the victim. The investigation is ongoing and an autopsy is pending.

Kona International Airport is opened this morning after shutting down on Monday afternoon. Dozens of flights were cancelled or diverted after officials found cracks in the runway. The Hawaii Department of Transportation hired contractors to mill and resurface a ten-by-ten-foot section of the runway overnight. The airport reopened at about 4:30 a.m. Tuesday and flights resumed at 6 a.m. Travelers are advised to expect delays and check with their airline for any scheduling changes.

The owner of the Honolulu Star-Advertiser announced that the Mississippi-based Carpenter Media Group and its partners are in the process of buying Oahu Publications. Besides the Star-Advertiser, Oahu Publications also include The Garden Island, West-Hawaii Today, the Hawaii Tribune-Herald and MidWeek. Carpenter Media Groups owns newspapers in several other states like Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi and Tennessee, just to name a few. They're expecting the deal to be completed by March 15th.

Scientists are reporting encouraging signs in the waters off Lahaina. Last week, Lahaina got more than four inches of rain, the most rain it has seen at once since the devastating wildfire in August. There were serious concerns about toxic ash and debris washing into the ocean and causing pollution and public health issues. While water test results aren't available yet, environmentalists say it appears that soiltac kept a lot of the ash in place, though some toxicity probably still washed into the ocean. More wildlife and marine life have been seen in the Lahaina area as of late as well, including a monk seal that recently came to rest on the shore.

China's cyber army is attacking critical U.S. services, including Hawaii's infrastructure. The Washington Post reported that U.S. officials and industry security officials say the Chinese military is targeting power and water utilities as well as communications and transportation systems. Over the past year, hackers with China's People's Liberation Army have hacked into about two dozen computer systems for critical entities and The Post mentioned one of the targets was "a water utility in Hawaii." However, it's not clear yet which one was impacted.

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Local Kauaʻi News – Wednesday January 17, 2024

Sue Kanoho, our executive director of the Kauaʻi Visitors Bureau has been promoted to managing director of the Hawaiʻi Visitors and Convention Bureau's island chapters throughout the state. She also remains in her role at the Kauai Visitors Bureau. The Hawaiʻi Visitors and Convention Bureau is contracted by the Hawaiʻi Tourism Authority for marketing services in the continental U.S. Kanoho will lead the island chapters with the Hawaiʻi Tourism Authority, county and state officials and departments. Kanoho will also be responsible for the Island Destination Brand Management and Marketing while . Kanoho has been with the Hawaiʻi Visitors and Convention Bureau over 26 years as the executive director of the Kauaʻi Visitors Bureau. Prior to joining the the Kauaʻi Visitors Bureau team, Kanoho was the executive director of the Kauaʻi Economic Development Board for 10 years.

The 2024 Hawaii Legislative Session begins today. Lawmakers will convene at the state capitol at ten a.m. Today is expected to be more of an introductory day than a discussion day. Speeches and an overview of the house rules are planned. Several lawmakers agree that one of the main topics this year will be recovery from the Maui wildfires. Other priorities include affordable housing, renewable energy, healthcare, and mental health services.

The remaining 60-thousand-gallons of fuel are expected to be removed from the Navy's Red Hill storage facility by the end of March. After that happens, a new Navy team will take over operations and shut down the facility. Then, an environmental cleanup process can begin. It's expected to take several years. So far, more than 100-million gallons of fuel have been removed from the troubled World War Two-era facility. But, there are still lasting effects. The Red Hill Water Alliance Initiative estimates up to one-point-nine-million gallons of fuel may have spilled into the aquifer below Red Hill during the past several decades.

The Hawaii Medical Service Association is confirming a cyberattack that may have jeopardized some members' data. The attack targeted HMSA's vendor partner, Navvis. Without giving a specific date, Navvis says the cyberattack happened in the latter half of 2023. The number of current and former HMSA members who were impacted is not known. But, cybercriminals may have gained access to personal identifiers, along with health and medical information. Navvis says it will mail letters to impacted HMSA members.

Hawaii has recorded its first flu-related death of a child this flu season. The state's Department of Health said the child was an Oahu resident, but an exact age wasn't given. The department says flu cases have been on the rise in recent weeks, along with rising RSV cases and ongoing COVID-19 activity. Hawaii's last pediatric death from influenza was in June. Health officials say residents can get their flu vaccines and can take other basic prevention measures, like washing hands, to decrease the risk of the contagious respiratory illness.

Accused Honolulu crime boss Mike Miske will be in court for his trial on Monday, when opening statements are expected to be heard. The jury selection process, which has already lasted a week, is in its final phases. Forty-four prospective jurors have been chosen, with another ten ordered to report to the Honolulu federal courthouse. The ten will be excused if the other 44 all show up later this week.

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Next, the 44 prospective jurors will be narrowed down to 18. After that, they will be sworn in and given preliminary instructions.

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Local Kauaïi News – Thursday January 18, 2024

On Oahu Honolulu Police Chief Joe Logan continues to face questions about how his department handled a deadly island-wide manhunt for a shooting suspect on New Year's Day. On Wednesday, Logan faced the Honolulu Police Commission for the first time since the events. Earlier in the day, a father and son sued the HPD for police brutality, saying they were beaten and held down by cops near where the manhunt ended. Three police commissioners told the chief the public deserves an explanation after the serious allegation of police brutality was made. Police commissioners also told Logan the HPD should have done a better job informing the public in real time during the manhunt.

Reinstating a fire marshal's office in Hawaii is a topic expected to be discussed during this year's legislative session on Oahu, which started Wednesday. Several lawmakers have come out in support of the idea in the aftermath of the deadly Maui wildfires in August. Hawaii is the only state without a fire marshal's office and hasn't had one in 45 years. Lawmakers expect six bills to be introduced that are related to reinstating the fire marshal's office. The exact role it would serve and how much it would cost are not yet clear.

Hawaii Attorney General Anne Lopez is calling for a federal ban on the sale of menthol cigarettes and flavored cigars. Lopez was among 21 attorneys general that sent a letter to the Biden Administration on Tuesday. They're urging the administration to finalize its review of proposed rules that would ban the sale of the controversial products. Lopez says the proposed FDA rules are backed by evidence and are long overdue. Supporters say prohibiting the sale of menthol cigarettes and flavored cigars would save lives.

Hawaii U.S. Senators Mazie Hirono and Brian Schatz are introducing a bill that aims to improve the planning of emergency evacuation routes nationwide. Evacuations have been a widely discussed topic since the wildfire that killed 100 people in Lahaina last August. The bill, proposed Wednesday, is called The Emergency Vehicle and Community Planning Act. It would direct the U.S. Department of Transportation and FEMA to develop general guidance and best practices for states, territories, tribes and local governments to use in their transportation infrastructure planning.

Maui County is facing a large shortage of government workers. The county says it needs to fill at least 800 government-funded positions. The most vacant jobs are within the Maui Police Department. There are about 500 to 600 open permanent positions and another 300 open seasonal positions. Seasonal jobs include college interns and school crossing guards. The Maui County Council has approved adding about 245 government positions in the past three years.

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Local Kauaī News – Friday January 19, 2024

Macy's on Kauai is closing after more than 30 years here on Kauai. It's part of the retail giant's strategic move to adapt to a changing retail landscape. The Macy's store, the anchor of Kukui Grove Center in Lihue, is one of five locations across the U.S. that Macy's plans to close. Macy's plans on cutting more than 2,300 positions nationwide. It's a move to trim costs and turn around slowing sales. The store, is one of five locations across the U.S. that Macy's plans to close. The company notified employees about layoffs on Thursday. It comes just months after Macy's closed its Windward Mall location on Oahu.

The chair of the Kauai County Council is confirming that Councilmember Billy DeCosta received an anonymous threat. Council Chair Mel Rapozo said DeCosta's office area is shared with five other individuals and requires a key card for entry. The county council held a "Special Emergency Meeting" on Thursday after DeCosta had found a threatening note on his desk two days earlier. The incident has led to enhanced security measures at the county building which include a sign-up sheets for people coming into the building to the hiring of full-time security from 7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. every day. Also no unauthorized people will be allowed in secure areas, and that all meetings would be done in conference rooms. The Hawaii Department of Education had announced on Thursday that DeCosta was being placed on a leave of absence from his teaching job at Kapa'a High School, but did not provide any details.

A traffic incident on Kauai that occurred shortly before 7 a.m. on Thursday resulted in the closure of Kaumualī Highway near Piko Road Intersection. A compact SUV with a single occupant veered off Kaumualī Highway and struck a utility pole. The utility pole fell and struck another passing vehicle. Police and medics responded to the scene and the driver of the SUV was transported to Wilcox Hospital and treated for non-life-threatening injuries. The incident resulted in an extended closure of the highway while crews worked to restore services to the area. Westbound traffic was redirected through Ōmao Road to Kōloa Road and eastbound traffic is being redirected through Piko Road to Kōloa Road. Kaumualī Highway reopened fully at about 5 PM.

More than 600 registered nurses at Kapiolani Medical Center for Women and Children will walk off the job on Sunday. Their strike is slated to last one week. This will be the first strike at Kapiolani Medical Center in nearly 50 years. The hospital is bringing in hundreds of traveling nurses to temporarily replace the striking nurses. Administrators at the state's only maternity and pediatric specialty hospital are offering to meet the nurses' union for another round of contract negotiations, but not until January 31st.

Big Island police are investigating after a homeless woman gave birth on a sidewalk in Downtown Hilo, then abandoned the baby. Authorities say the 41-year-old woman was found late Thursday afternoon walking the streets with the baby girl still attached by the umbilical cord. First responders say she was dragging the baby. After medics cut the cord, the woman got up and walked away. Police tracked her down, before she was taken to a hospital for treatment. The baby was breathing but not moving when medics arrived. She is now being treated at Hilo Medical Center and is said to be in good condition. The baby is in the custody of Child Welfare Services.

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Governor Josh Green is advocating for lawmakers to pass a bill that would lower Hawaii's blood-alcohol concentration limit for drunk driving. It is currently at point-zero-eight and would be lowered to point-zero-five to warrant a drunk driving arrest. On Thursday, Green spoke in strong favor of the bill alongside members of the Hawaii Alcohol Policy Alliance. The alliance says about 40-percent of the traffic accident deaths in Hawaii are alcohol-related.

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Local Kauaī News – Monday January 22, 2024

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Local Kauaï News – Tuesday January 23, 2024

The Kauai Office of the County Clerk, Council Services Division announces a series of island wide Town Halls hosted by Council Chair Mel Rapozo. The purpose of the Town Halls are to gather community concerns in preparation for upcoming County Budget deliberations beginning in late March 2024. The first of the town halls will be held this Thursday, 1/25/2024 at the Hanalei Neighborhood Center 5:30 – 7:00 p.m. with the next town hall to be held Monday, 1/29/2024 at Kīlauea Neighborhood Center 5:30 – 7:00 p.m. There will be additional town halls at locations around our island next month.

Prosecutors in the corruption trial against former administrators for the city and county of Honolulu are planning to use newly unsealed court records as evidence against them. The documents include transcripts of audio recordings that were secretly recorded by Acting HPD Chief Cary Okimoto, who was hired after disgraced ex-police chief Louis Kealoha retired. The recordings show that city officials, Donna Leong, Roy Amemiya, and Max Sword, were planning a scheme to pay off Kealoha without getting city council approval and were doing everything they could to get Okimoto to cooperate. The three are being charged with conspiracy to defraud the government. Leong is also charged with an extra crime for lying to federal agents.

An alleged crime boss in one of Hawaii's most high-profile organized crime trials is set to stand trial alone after a guilty plea from his half brother. John Stancil, the half brother of alleged crime boss Mike Miske, pleaded guilty to being part of the "Miske Criminal Enterprise." He admitted to being part of a murder-for-hire and responsible for at least two of the gang's alleged crimes. According to prosecutors, the group is linked to dozens of crimes like smuggling drugs, extortion, assault, and robbery. Now, Miske is left as the only defendant and several alleged former members of the "Miske Criminal Enterprise" expected to testify against him.

Governor Josh Green is renewing his calls to impose a 25-dollar climate impact fee on tourists. Visitors would be hit with the charge when staying at a hotel or short-term vacation rental. Green believes the fee would generate 68-million-dollars per year, money he says is needed to offset the impacts of global warming. A bill that called for charging visitors a 50-dollar fee died during last year's Hawaii legislative session. It has since been rebranded as a climate impact fee rather than a visitor fee or green fee, as it was called last year.

Today, a Hawaii County Council committee is expected to be introduced to several bills that would limit the number of short-term vacation rentals on the Big Island. The bills are in response to ongoing complaints about noise, parking and character loss in residential and agricultural areas. The goal would be to replace many short-term rentals with more long-term rentals. Lawmakers are hoping the changes also lead to reduced housing costs.

Governor Josh Green will declare a moratorium on all short-term rentals in West Maui unless enough people step up to house families displaced by the deadly Lahaina fire. That's what he said during his second State of the State Address this morning. Governor Green kicked off his speech by taking a moment of silence in honor of those who died in the wildfire. He said hundreds of millions of dollars are going into recovery efforts, but there's more work to be done when it comes to addressing the

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issue of housing those affected. Green added that more than half of all short-term rentals are owned by non-state residents who make "on average four times what they would if the property was simply rented to a local family."

It's day three of the registered nurses' strike at Kapiolani Medical Center for Women and Children. And, not everyone is taking kind to the sound of about 600 nurses protesting on the picket lines. Union reps say hospital patients are complaining about noise, with some saying they've had to switch rooms because of it. But, the Hawaii Nurses Association says it can't stop people from driving by and honking their horns in support. Dozens of nurses have been seen chanting and line dancing as well. There have also been noise complaints from patients at Shiners Hospital across the street. The strike is expected to last a week.

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Local Kauaʻi News – Wednesday January 24, 2024

Our Kauaʻi Police Department is asking for the public’s help in locating a runaway juvenile. Jermaine K. Tolentino, a 13-year-old from of Kōloa, was reported missing on Jan. 22. He was last seen on Monday morning while getting ready to attend a local middle school. He is known to frequent the Līhuʻe and Kōloa areas. Tolentino is 5-foot-3 inches tall and weighs approximately 110 pounds. He has a slim build and medium complexion, brown hair, brown eyes and is of Filipino descent. He was last seen wearing a green Chiefess Kamakahelei Middle School t-shirt, black pajama pants and a black hat. Anyone with information about Tolentino’s whereabouts is urged to contact KPD Dispatch at 808-241-1711.

Mayor Derek S.K. Kawakami traveled last week to Washington, D.C., to participate in the U.S. Conference of Mayors 92nd Winter Meeting. In addition, the Mayor met with the Hawaiʻi Congressional delegation to highlight and discuss federal priorities for the County of Kauaʻi, and conduct business meetings with various federal agencies on topics impacting our community. On Oahu A woman is fighting for her life after a suspected liquid chemical attack near the Ala Moana Center. Whoever attacked the 25-year-old woman on Tuesday night is still on the loose. Honolulu EMS says she was assaulted with an "unknown chemical" and is hospitalized in critical condition. Last year, there was a chemical attack in Mililani that also left a woman critically injured.

Witnesses are beginning to take the stand in the Mike Miske criminal conspiracy trial. The alleged crime boss is expected to see hundreds of witnesses testify against him in the coming weeks, including several former associates. On Tuesday, the court heard from 78-year-old Robert Lee, a retired accountant who owned a building material company that went bankrupt. Lee says one of Miske's associates robbed him, kidnapped him, and beat him in 2017. Lee says he had fallen out with a business partner, who he believes hired Miske's people to hurt him. Prosecutors say three of Miske's associates were involved in that crime.

Hawaii is expanding its eligibility limits for The Preschool Open Doors program. It's now being offered to children as young as three-years-old. The program helps eligible Hawaii families pay preschool fees for up to one year before a child enters kindergarten. More information on the program can be found on PatchHawaii.org [[Patch-Hawaii-dot-org]].

The domestic abuse case against former Honolulu City Councilmember Ikaika Anderson has been dismissed. Anderson was charged in May after being accused of injuring his girlfriend. According to a police report, the woman told police that Anderson had physically abused her, allegedly causing "pain and visible injuries." Anderson released a statement saying he is relieved that this "assault" on his character and reputation "is over."

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Local Kauaī News – Thursday January 25, 2024

Jermaine K. Tolentino, a 13-year-old resident of Kōloa, who was reported missing on Jan. 22. has returned to his family safely Wednesday night, Jan. 24. No injuries were reported. KPD would like to thank the community for their support during the search.

You are invited to Tonight's first of a series of island wide Town Halls hosted by Council Chair Mel Rapozo. The purpose of the Town Halls are to gather community concerns in preparation for upcoming County Budget deliberations beginning in late March 2024. Tonight's meeting is happening at the Hanalei Neighborhood Center from 5:30 – 7:00 p.m.

PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) is criticizing Meta founder Mark Zuckerberg's plan to raise cattle on his property on Kauai. Earlier this month, Zuckerberg announced he had started raising cattle at Koolau Ranch to make the "highest quality beef," and said he would be feeding the animals macadamia meal and beer. A new PETA news release calls it a "cockamamie cattle project."

Honolulu police are still searching for a man who attacked a woman with a liquid chemical near the Ala Moana Center. The suspect in Tuesday night's attack is believed to be a man in his 20s. Police say the man fled on foot, but was later seen riding a bicycle while shirtless. The victim, a 25-year-old woman, is hospitalized in critical condition with severe burns to the front of her body.

State lawmakers are introducing a set of bills that may allow Hawaiian Electric to cover the heavy costs of the Maui wildfires. Two bills have been submitted at HECO's request and another two have been submitted as part of Governor Josh Green's package of bills. If the bills are passed, HECO would be allowed to raise consumer rates without first going through the standard rate-making process. The utility company would be allowed to issue a new type of bond to help pay for wildfire mitigation and expenses. Hawaiian Electric is looking at potentially hundreds of millions of dollars in legal fees and settlements. It's facing dozens of lawsuits from people who claim it should be held liable for starting the deadly fires in August.

A judge is recusing himself from the upcoming bribery trial of former Honolulu prosecuting attorney Keith Kaneshiro. U.S. District Judge J. Michael Seabright, who had been presiding over the case since 2022, abruptly recused himself on Wednesday morning. No explanation has been given. Jury selection in the high-profile trial is scheduled for next month. Kaneshiro is accused of taking campaign donations from employees of an engineering and architectural firm. In exchange, he allegedly agreed to prosecute a former company employee.

The Hawaii Department of Health is announcing a voluntary recall for a brand of cough syrup. Robitussin Honey CF Max Day Adult and Robitussin Honey CF Max Nighttime Adult cough syrup products may have microbial contamination. The recall applies to eight lots of the cough syrup, which were distributed nationally and at retail stores and pharmacies in Hawaii. Immunocompromised people could develop severe or life-threatening adverse effects if they use the contaminated product. To date, there have been no reports of adverse effects linked with the cough syrup.

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Local Kauaʻi News – Friday January 26, 2024

Kauai County officials are announcing that registration for the upcoming 2024 Spring Basketball Tournament Series will be held on Thursday, Feb. 1, and Friday, Feb. 2, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Registration will be held in person. Participation costs \$30 per child, payable to the coach once the child is assigned to a team. Registration in person will be held at the following locations: Kekaha Neighborhood Center, Hanapēpē Neighborhood Center, Kalāheo Neighborhood Center, Līhuʻe Neighborhood Center and the Kapaʻa Neighborhood Center. The program is open to boys and girls in 3rd grade through 8th grade, elementary and middle school divisions. There will be separate teams for girls and boys. The tentative start date for the series is March 2024.

County officials would like to remind Kauaʻi property owners that the second installment of real property taxes for the 2023-2024 tax year is due on Tuesday, Feb. 20. Real property tax bills were mailed out on January 19, 2024. If you have not yet received your bill and you don't have a lender escrow/impound account, please call the Real Property Collections Division at 808-241-4272. Payments can be made online at kauai.rpt.ehawaii.gov, by mail, in person, or at the drop box located outside the Kapulē Building at the Līhuʻe Civic Center. Please make checks payable to the Director of Finance.

On Oahu A man is behind bars in connection with a chemical attack that left a woman in critical condition. A 29-year-old man was arrested in the Nimitz area on Thursday night. He is accused of second-degree attempted murder. The victim, a 25-year-old woman, suffered burns to her face and front of her body near the Ala Moana Center on Tuesday night. She remains hospitalized. On Thursday, the woman was identified as a Chinese language teacher at Maryknoll School. A good Samaritan who rushed to her aid after the attack says the victim did not know the attacker or why he did it.

Officials say boats should reduce their speed as humpback whales return to Hawaii. Each year between November and May, thousands of humpback whales travel to the state to breed and give birth. During this time, boats in water depths of 600-feet or less should travel up to 15 knots to protect the safety of the whales. When a boat is directly approaching a whale, speed should be reduced to six knots or less. An official says collisions with whales are a risk for the next several months and boaters need to look out for the animals.

Also on Oahu An arrest has been made in connection with last Saturday's shooting that left a 64-year-old innocent bystander dead in his own driveway in Waianae. A 21-year-old man was arrested Thursday. Police believe he shot from a car at another car, but missed, hitting the victim. Police also say the incident started as a confrontation between two groups of people at a nearby Longs Drugs. The suspect is facing manslaughter, attempted murder and gun charges.

Honolulu Police Chief Joe Logan is defending Thursday's officer-involved shooting that left a man dead in Makaha on Oahu. Logan says officers opened fire after the man lunged at them with a knife. But, he admits it's not clear if the suspect was still holding the knife at the moment he was shot.

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Seconds before, he had been shot with a taser and dropped the knife, then got back up. Logan has seen body camera footage and believes the knife may have been thrown at the officers.

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Local Kauaïi News – Monday January 29, 2024

Our Kauai Office of the County Clerk Elections division will begin offering candidate nomination and filing services beginning on February 1, 2024. Services are offered Monday through Friday during the regular office hours of 7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The deadline to file nomination papers is June 4, 2024. Prospective candidates can file nomination papers at any time during regular office hours but are encouraged to schedule an appointment to ensure prompt and timely service. Prior to beginning the candidate nomination and filing process, prospective candidates are encouraged to visit the State Office of Elections' webpage to review information on the process.

There is new information about the man accused of attacking a woman with a liquid chemical near the Ala Moana Center last week. Court documents show he has been arrested 55 previous times, mostly for trespassing. He was released from jail last Monday, the day before the attack, after posting an eight-thousand-dollar bond for drug and assault charges connected with a case from October. There are reports the man was living in a homeless encampment. On Saturday, he was charged with second-degree attempted murder and first-degree assault. The victim, a 25-year-old schoolteacher, is still hospitalized with burns to the front of her body. According to police statements She will likely have permanent disfigurement .

Hundreds of registered nurses at Kapiolani Medical Center for Women and Children are back at work, but they still don't have a new contract. A week-long strike against the hospital and in protest of understaffing ended Sunday morning. Contract talks are slated to resume Wednesday.

Six people are recovering from minor injuries after an American Airlines plane had to make a "hard landing" in Hawaii over the weekend. F-A-A and airline officials said the plane made the hard landing on the runway at Kahului [[KAH-hoo-loo-ee]] Airport in Maui on Saturday. It was flying out of Los Angeles. One passenger and five flight attendants were hospitalized and later released. The airline said 167 passengers and seven crew members were on board the aircraft, which has been taken out of service and is undergoing inspection.

Seven people are safe after the boat they were on capsized off Magic Island. The group was rescued by Honolulu Ocean Safety lifeguards on Sunday morning. The 15 to 18-foot boat flipped in the surf. None of the seven passengers, all adults in their 20s and 30s, were wearing life jackets. There are no reports of injuries.

Sunday marked Hawaii's first humpback whale count of the year. A total of two-thousand-124 whales were spotted off the islands. The most were seen off Maui. More than 400 volunteers took part in the Sanctuary Ocean Count and Great Whale Count. Humpback whales were seen from 44 different sites. Officials admit there may have been some duplicate sightings. This was the first of three coordinated whale counts this year. The next ones are on the last Saturdays of February and March.

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Local Kauaʻi News – Tuesday January 30, 2024

On Oahu The suspect in a chemical attack near the Ala Moana Center will remain behind bars on two-million-dollars bail. The 29-year-old man made his first court appearance on Monday. He is charged with second-degree attempted murder and first-degree assault. He allegedly threw a liquid chemical on a 25-year-old schoolteacher as she was walking down a street last week. The woman is from China and was working a guest teacher at Maryknoll School through an international exchange program. The woman who was attacked with a liquid chemical near the Ala Moana Center last week will likely be permanently disfigured. That's according to police statements featured in court documents that were released Monday.

Also On Oahu The Hawaii Department of Health is ordering the Navy to retest the water in its Waiawa Shaft. People who use the Navy water system have recently made 50 complaints about tap water and air quality. The Waiawa Shaft is the water source for the Navy water distribution system. It was last tested in October and no petroleum was detected. Meanwhile, the DOH is planning to visit affected homes to conduct on-site inspections and collect water samples for testing.

The rest of our state could join Oahu in banning single-use plastics. A bill recently introduced in the state House of Representatives would outlaw single-use plastics statewide. Oahu's ban took effect at the start of 2023, but it only covers traditional, petroleum-based plastics. The bill also includes bioplastics. Some items would be exempt from the ban to offset costs for businesses. They include disposable plastic condiment packages, other prepackaged food items and plastic single-use water bottles. The Energy and Environmental Protection Committee will hear the bill this morning.

Alaska Airlines, which is in the process of acquiring Hawaiian Airlines, has created a Hawaii Community Advisory Board. Alaska Airlines says the board, announced Monday, will work to honor the legacy and significance of the Hawaiian Airlines brand. Alaska Airlines announced a one-point-nine-billion-dollar deal to buy Hawaiian Airlines in early December. The purchase is awaiting federal approval. Alaska Airlines has operated in Hawaii for 16 years. But, the purchase would make Hawaii the second largest hub in its system, behind Seattle.

Maui is seeing an unusually high number of boats run aground. Two boats got stuck on the shore of south Maui last week, taking the total in the past year to 15 boats island-wide. That's not counting the nearly 80 boats that were damaged or sunk during the Lahaina wildfire. Officials say most of the groundings were caused by powerful storms that brought winds of at least 50-miles-per-hour. As far as the two boats that ran aground last week, the state has awarded an 842-thousand-dollar contract to a company that will work to salvage one of them. It's considering hitting the owner of the other boat with a large fine.

A pilot and explorer says he found Amelia Earhart's long-lost plane. CEO of Deep Sea Vision Tony Romeo sold commercial real estate to fund his deep-sea exploration of the Pacific Ocean last year. The former US Air Force intelligence officer used sonar technology to inspect the ocean floor in the area Earhart is suspected to have crashed in 1937. His team reviewed the data in December and say

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they found a shocking discovery: a blurry plane-like shape Romeo believes to be Earhart's. It was taken about halfway between Australia and Hawaii.

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Local Kauaʻi News – Wednesday January 31, 2024

Our Kauai Department of Parks and Recreation announces that the Vidinha Stadium track and field will be closed from Feb. 6 to March 1, weather permitting. The closure is necessary to conduct temporary repairs to the track. If you have any questions, please call the Department of Parks and Recreation at 808-241-4460.

Also on Kauai In an effort to improve service and accommodate student commuter hours, the Kauaʻi Bus will be adjusting timing to some routes beginning Feb. 12, 2024. Route 850, from LThu'e to Wailua, will now start at 12:45 p.m.; it was previously 12:30 p.m. Route 60, the Kapahi Shuttle, will now start at 2:45 p.m.; it was previously 2:25 p.m. Please check the bus schedule for other updated times at www.kauai.gov/BusSchedules

On Oahu The suspect in a chemical attack near the Ala Moana Center has been indicted for second-degree attempted murder and first-degree assault. 29-year-old Sebastian Mahkwan was indicted by an Oahu grand jury on Tuesday. He allegedly threw a liquid chemical on a teacher as she was walking down a street. The victim remains hospitalized. Mahkwan is being held without bail at the Oahu Community Correctional Center. If convicted, he faces up to 10 years in prison for the assault charge and a mandatory sentence of life in prison with the possibility of parole for the attempted murder charge.

Also on Oahu An hours-long standoff in Waikiki that shut down several roads on Tuesday has come to an end with no injuries reported and a suspect in custody, officials said on Wednesday. Police arrested a 24-year-old man around 1:25 a.m. He faces a robbery charge. It all started around 4:30 p.m. Tuesday at the Waikiki Sunset Hotel. HPD said the suspect had been staying in the hotel and robbed a 60-year-old man, who sources say is a hotel employee. Hundreds of hotel guests and condo residents were evacuated.

And on Oahu A section of the beach has been blocked off after a balcony railing collapsed at the Moana Surfrider Hotel. Emergency crews responded to the Honolulu Hotel Tuesday afternoon after a metal railing fell from a room. The Honolulu Fire Department says the balcony didn't directly hit anyone. One person was being treated by Ocean Safety when emergency responders arrived at the scene, and another person suffered a minor injury while trying to escape the falling railing. It's unclear what caused the railing to collapse.

A newly proposed state Senate bill would create an alert system for missing adults with developmental disabilities. It would act similar to an AMBER Alert, but would be called a Silver Alert. A Silver alert system is already in place in California. To qualify, a missing person would have to be at least 18-years-old, be developmentally disabled or cognitively impaired, and their disappearance would have to pose a threat to the health and safety of themselves or others. Proponents of the bill say half of the adults who go missing in Hawaii have disabilities like dementia and are more likely to be seriously injured if they're not found within 24 hours.

Hawaii lawmakers are considering a constitutional amendment that would let property tax revenue

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fund public schools. The House bill would allow the state to place a surcharge on residential investment properties valued at three-million-dollars or more. There would be an exemption for primary residences and affordable housing. Supporters say it would make some of Hawaii's most wealthy homeowners better support the education system, which is historically underfunded. But, opponents say the bill's language is misleading to voters and could discourage real estate investment on the islands. A similar bill failed to pass six years ago.

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Local Kauaʻi News by Wilma Lee Kapp
2024 - Quarter 1 – January – February - March

Local Kauaʻi News – Thursday February 1, 2024

The Hawaiʻi Department of Transportation (HDOT) is providing an update on the closure of the one lane of Kuamoʻo Road in the vicinity of the ʻŌpaekaʻa Falls Scenic Lookout in Wailua. On Dec. 20, 2023, HDOT closed one lane of the two-lane road due to slope instability. A temporary traffic signal has been installed to allow alternating traffic to use the single remaining lane. Highway users are urged to use caution and avoid the area if possible. Emergency work is ongoing to stabilize the slope supporting the westbound lane. This work consists of installation of soil nails to anchor the slope face to the soil beneath the road and replacement of an adjacent waterline to address drainage. Project completion is estimated for mid-May of this year.

About 78-hundred of Hawaii's unionized public workers are entitled to hazard pay for working at public schools during the pandemic. It follows an arbitrator's ruling that favors members of the Hawaii Government Employees Association, the state's largest union. The ruling says the school workers should get hazard pay of 15 to 25-percent. Overall, they are owed an estimated 120 million to 150-million-dollars in retroactive hazard pay. Governor Josh Green says the state legislature needs to figure out how and where to come up with the money.

An alleged top associate of suspected crime kingpin, Mike Miske, was back on the witness stand on Wednesday. Wayne Miller, who is testifying in Miske's trial, made several serious claims. Miller claims he was Miske's right-hand man, and received several orders to have people assaulted or killed, often because of money or personal grudges. That meant placing trackers on vehicles and following people for long periods of time. Miller also claims Miske wanted a longtime girlfriend killed, offering he and other associates 200-thousand-dollars to carry out an execution, but they declined to do it. Miller will be back on the stand today.

A hotel in Waikiki is cutting off access to all of its balconies after a balcony railing collapsed earlier this week. The metal railing of the fifth-floor balcony at the Moana Surfrider Hotel fell onto the beach below on Tuesday. Two people suffered minor injuries but neither took a direct hit. Inspectors are now assessing all of the hotel's balconies to check their integrity and safety.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates the Maui wildfires cost farmers 23-point-one-million-dollars in damage and economic losses. The damage was from fire and wind that ravaged West Maui last August. The USDA came to the figure after factoring in property damage, livestock deaths, the reduction of customers, and reduced agricultural sales due to destroyed crops and markets. It also cites reduced agritourism income between August and December.

The father and son filing a federal lawsuit against the Honolulu Police Department for alleged police brutality are speaking out. The son, a 25-year-old man, claims race played a role. He thinks police had him confused with the suspect they were going after during an island-wide manhunt on New Year's Day because he is Tongan. The man says he was rammed against a fence by a police vehicle, then beaten by several officers, leaving him with serious injuries including a concussion and a facial fracture. His father says he was handcuffed and held down to the pavement while his son was

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beaten, adding that he thought his son was dead. The father and son say they are willing to cooperate after HPD's internal affairs asked to interview them.

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Local Kauaʻi News – Friday February 2, 2024

Here on Kauai In an initiative to address the growing concern and negative impacts of the Rose-ringed parakeet , the Office of Economic Development has announced a new citizen science mapping tool to engage the local community and visitors in tracking and gathering data. The initiative, led by the Kauaʻi Rose-Ringed Parakeet Working Group, aims to monitor bird sightings and inform on population management measures to reduce the spread of the invasive bird species. The Rose-ringed Parakeet poses a significant threat to the agriculture sector and the delicate ecological balance of Kauaʻi. To Participate in the monitoring go to the Kauai.gov website and scan the QR code in the news release from our Office of Economic Development.

Parking rates are increasing at some airports across Hawaii. Rates are going up at Lihue Airport on Kauai and Maui's Kahului Airport. It'll also cost more to park at Kona International Airport and Hilo International Airport on the Big Island. The maximum daily charge will be 24-dollars and the monthly rate will cost 189-dollars. Officials say money generated from the hike in parking rates will go towards airport improvements like the construction of additional parking lots, new parking equipment and stall counters.

The defense team for Mike Miske is getting its chance to grill the suspected crime boss's so-called right-hand man. Wayne Miller was questioned by Miske's attorney on Thursday, after spending much of the week accusing Miske of drug dealing, kidnapping people, and arranging for people he was feuding with to be killed. Miller also said Miske gave him nearly 400-thousand-dollars for drugs, but the defense says that money has apparently disappeared, pointing out that the cash was not part of the evidence. Miske's attorney tried to get Miller to admit his testimony was false, and that he had lied under oath. Miller has been on the stand for three days this week.

Lieutenant Governor Sylvia Luke says the state remains committed to expanding access to preschools through her "Ready Keiki" initiative. Luke says preschools should be more affordable for families during the 2024-2025 school year. The Department of Human Services' Preschool Open Doors Program will be expanding to include keiki as young as three-years-old. Income eligibility limits will also be increasing. Luke and other state officials expect their efforts to lead to two-thousand more keiki being enrolled in preschools.

Hawaii could see an unofficial statewide ban on short-term vacation rentals. That would be made possible through a bill introduced by the chairman of the Senate Commerce and Consumer Protection Committee. The bill would give counties the power to completely phase out short-term vacation rentals over time. The Hawaii County Council is already considering its own ban. State lawmakers have introduced similar legislation in the past, but it has all failed to get enough support.

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Local Kauaʻi News – Monday February 5, 2024

Our Kauaʻi Police Department has opened a homicide investigation after an unidentified body was found following a vehicle fire in Anahola on Friday morning. At approximately 3 a.m. on Friday, firefighters responded to a report of a vehicle fire at Anahola Beach Park. After the fire was fully extinguished, police arrived on scene and discovered an unidentified body located inside the vehicle. The identity of the victim has not been released at this time as the case remains under investigation. Anyone with information about this incident is urged to call KPD Dispatch at 808-241-1711. Those wishing to remain anonymous can provide information by submitting a tip to Crime Stoppers Kauaʻi at [cskauai.org](https://www.cskauai.org) Tipsters may be eligible for up to one thousand dollars in reward money.

On the Big Island A man is behind bars on suspicion of flying to Kona International Airport with 12-thousand-dollars worth of fentanyl. Big Island police say the man had just arrived on a flight from the mainland on Friday, when officers caught him with more than 21 grams of a powdered substance, suspected to be fentanyl. The DEA says just point-oh-two milligrams of fentanyl is enough to be considered a deadly dose. The man, who was already out on bail in a separate case, is due in Kona District Court today.

Members of the state house's Economic Development Committee are mulling a bill that, if enacted, would legalize sports wagering in Hawaii. Supporters say House Bill 2765 would establish licensing requirements for sports-wagering operators and suppliers. Opponents, meanwhile, reportedly cite numerous studies blaming gambling for social issues such as divorce, child abuse, bankruptcy, embezzlement, theft homelessness and suicide. The bill also enjoys strong support from the state Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism. A hearing on the bill is set for next week Wednesday.

Over 22-hundred plaintiffs are joining a lawsuit against the U.S. government over the Red Hill water contamination crisis. Those plaintiffs were added in court documents filed on Monday. That's ten times the number of plaintiffs who were initially part of the lawsuit, according to the attorney involved. The lawsuit claims the government was negligent and "failed to warn anybody of potential contamination." Plaintiffs also allege the 2021 Red Hill fuel spill compromised their health.

The chairman of the board for the Hawaiian Electric Company is essentially suing his own company. Timothy Johns is also the president and CEO of Zephyr Insurance, a local insurance company that's suing HECO and its affiliated companies. The lawsuit claims HECO caused the deadly Maui wildfires last August. Hawaiian Electric officials say Johns made sure to not break any ethics rules. He has fully recused himself from any matters of discussion related to subrogation claims. And, Johns has been screened from receiving any economic benefits from Zephyr Insurance's claims.

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Local Kauaī News – Tuesday February 6, 2024

Kauai Police have arrested Joshua Thomas, a 33-year-old Līhu‘e man, in connection with an assault that occurred on Friday morning, Feb. 2. at the Hōīike Kauaī Community Television parking lot in Līhu‘e. An argument and altercation ensued when The victim, a 59-year-old man of Līhu‘e, approached Thomas and informed him that he was not allowed on the commercial property. The victim was treated at the scene by medics for non-life-threatening injuries and later taken to the Wilcox Memorial Hospital for further treatment, where he was subsequently released. Thomas was arrested without incident for Assault in the Second Degree and is currently being held at KPD cellblock with bail set at \$5,000. The case remains under police investigation. Anyone with information about this incident is urged to contact KPD Dispatch at 808-241-1711. Those wishing to remain anonymous can provide information by submitting a tip to crime stoppers at cskauai.org

[Crime Stoppers Kauai, Inc.](https://cskauai.org)

Crime Stoppers utilizes modern technology to acquire anonymous online crime tips. You do not have to identify yourself, and may be eligible for a cash reward.
cskauai.org

and may be eligible for a monetary reward.

The Maui Police Department has released the first probe into the wildfires that broke out on the island in Hawaii in August. The fires that destroyed the historic Lahaina district of the island were responsible for the deaths of 100 people and the burning of over 66-hundred acres. The report found that emergency dispatch was overwhelmed by call volume, with wind and flames leaving Lahaina without cellular or wi-fi capacity. It went on to also find that officers needed the training and tools to respond, recommending police vehicles now be equipped with a "breaching kit" to clear routes.

More than 22-hundred plaintiffs are part of a new lawsuit against the U.S. government involving the 2021 Red Hill fuel leaks and water crisis. Their attorneys say the Navy failed to warn residents of the dangers after the fuel spills that sickened thousands of people. The lawsuit also claims the plaintiffs are still dealing with lingering illnesses and says the Navy's water system is still contaminated. The lawsuit points to the Navy's own data from last year, which shows more than 16-hundred detections of total petroleum hydrocarbons in water tests from neighborhoods in the Pearl Harbor area.

Attorneys for ex-Honolulu city prosecutor Keith Kaneshiro want certain evidence excluded from his upcoming public corruption trial. A series of court filings detail what the defense does not want the government to present to the jury. That includes details about tax returns, campaign contributions and information about ex-deputy city Prosecutor Katherine Kealoha. Kaneshiro, Honolulu's longest serving prosecuting attorney, will go on trial on February 27th along with five co-defendants.

The Hawaii Department of Transportation is temporarily closing down a runway at the Honolulu Airport for taxiway and runway repairs. DOT officials said Runway 8R-26L will be closed on Wednesday from 7 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Other runways will still be in operation at HNL. HDOT said it's coordinated with airlines and other partners to minimize the impact on flights. DOT said passengers should still check with their airline for information regarding their specific flights.

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Hawaii State Hospital is overcrowded and most of the people there don't require hospitalization. That's according to revelations made during a hearing involving state lawmakers on Monday. Hospital Administrator Doctor Kenneth Luke testified in front of the Senate Health Committee and the House Health and Homelessness Committee. He says many of the patients have been charged with crimes and are awaiting evaluation or proper placement into community treatment for mental illnesses or substance abuse. Among the nearly 400 patients, only 23-percent medically need to be in the hospital. State hospital is the only hospital in Hawaii that offers secure treatment for people with mental illnesses.

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Local Kauaʻi News – Wednesday February 7, 2024

On Kauai's north shore Namahana Education Foundation in fundraising for the Namahana School surpassed the challenge to raise 1 million dollars with a 500 thousand donation from Mike Kaplan and Rose Contrades for the School's pre opening needs which is anticipated to happen in 2025. Namahana School is a tuition-free Hawaii public charter middle and high school for our north shore. The school is scheduled to open its doors to students in grades 7 and 8 in 2025 and will add a new grade each year until reaching full capacity in 2030. For more information on Namahana School go to Namahana.org

Kauai Police have arrested Helen Santiago, a 50-year-old woman of Kekaha, in connection with a three-vehicle traffic incident that closed Kaunualii Highway at approximately 4 p.m. on Monday, Feb. 5. Santiago's 2019 Nissan multipurpose vehicle was traveling eastbound on Kaunualii Highway near mile marker four, when the vehicle side swiped a 2016 Toyota multipurpose vehicle that was traveling westbound. The 2019 Nissan continued to cross the center line and collided head-on with a 2011 Toyota truck. The front seat passenger of the 2016 Toyota truck was transported to the Wilcox Memorial Hospital and treated for non-life-threatening injuries. No other injuries were reported. Santiago was arrested for Operating a Motor Vehicle Under the Influence of an Intoxicant. Kaunualii Highway was closed for approximately one and a half hours while police worked to investigate the scene and clear the roadway. Speed and alcohol appear to be factors in the crash.

On Oahu The public corruption trial of former Honolulu prosecuting attorney Keith Kaneshiro is being delayed by a few weeks. Kaneshiro and several co-defendants were supposed to go on trial on February 27th. The newly named presiding Judge Timothy Burgess has delayed it to March 12th. Burgess says he needs time to get up to speed with the case and address some outstanding legal issues. Burgess replaced Hawaii Judge Michael Seabright, who last month, suddenly recused himself from the trial without saying why.

Also on Oahu There is a report of a Honolulu police officer allegedly driving drunk and crashing a department-subsidized vehicle. The Honolulu Police Department confirms it has launched an administrative inquiry into the crash that left another driver hospitalized on January 8th. Witnesses say they saw Officer Tyson Chun, a 19-year veteran of the force, hit a car that was pulling out a Shopping Center, then clip a utility pole. Multiple witnesses say they also saw Chun toss beer bottles from his SUV after the crash, in a possible attempt to hide evidence. But, records show he was allowed to leave the scene without first being given a breathalyzer test.

A bill that could ban former president Donald Trump from appearing on Hawaii's ballot in November has passed its first hearing. The bill, introduced by State Senator Karl Rhoads, advanced out of the Senate Judiciary Committee on Tuesday. As written, it would exclude political candidates from elections if they have been disqualified by a constitutional or statutory provision. Trump supporters say the bill is specifically targeting the former president. But, Rhoads says it applies to all political candidates, adding that "if Joe Biden participates in an insurrection, it would apply to him, too."

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Discussion about a bill that would ban foreigners from buying property in Hawaii is heating up. More than two-thousand people have submitted testimony for or against the bill. The Senate Committees on Transportation and Culture and the Arts and Commerce and Consumer Protection heard testimony on Tuesday afternoon. The state Attorney General's Office is against the bill, saying it would illegally ban non-U.S. citizens from buying property on the islands. The Hawaii State Association of Realtors says it also opposes the bill

The trial of alleged crime boss Mike Miske has been put on pause. Federal court officials announced Monday that one of the jurors is sick, so the trial is on hold for one week. Miske is accused of dozens of organized crimes, including drug smuggling, robbery, extortion and assault. His trial began in January and hundreds of witnesses are expected to testify against him, including several former associates. Miske's trial will resume on February 12th.

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Local Kaua'i News – Thursday February 8, 2024

A 42-year-old Kapa'a man, Michael Sears, was arrested on Jan. 30 following a multi-agency operation led by the Kaua'i Police Department. Sears was sought on a \$250,000 warrant in connection with a drug investigation. On Jan. 30, KPD, with the assistance of the Maui Police Department and the U.S. Marshals Service Fugitive Task Force, apprehended Sears on Maui. No injuries were reported during the operation. Sears was arrested for the offense of Promoting a Dangerous Drug in the Second Degree. He has since been transported to the Kaua'i Community Correctional Center (KCCC) where he currently remains as he is unable to post the \$250,000 bail. Anyone with information pertaining to this investigation is urged to call KPD Dispatch at 808-241-1711. Those wishing to remain anonymous can provide information by submitting a tip at [cskauai.org](https://www.cskauai.org) and thus be eligible for a monetary reward.

The Kauai Police Department has released a list of verified firearm instructors after Hawaii's newest gun law went into effect. The law, which went into effect in January, requires prospective gun owners to take a safety training course to receive their gun permit. The course is taught by a verified instructor. The list of approved instructors is on the police department's website, and it includes instructors from JGB Arms and Hawaii Airsoft Guns Unlimited. Six instructors have successfully completed the verification process.

On Oahu The military is in its final weeks of defueling the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility, the site of a disastrous fuel leak in 2021. Joint Task Force-Red Hill held its final community open house on the defueling process on Wednesday. Defueling is expected to wrap up at the end of March, when the task force will turn operations over to Navy Closure Task Force-Red Hill. The Navy says 104-million-gallons of jet fuel have been drained from the facility six months ahead of schedule. The next step in the process is cleaning eleven miles of pipes and removing sludge from the bottoms of the fuel tanks, which is expected to take three years to complete.

The Hawaii legislative session is going on, and legalizing marijuana for recreational use is once again a big topic of discussion. The state Attorney General's Office recently drafted a legalization measure and Attorney General Anne Lopez has changed her stance in favor of legalization. The Senate bill would allow adults older than 21-years-old to use marijuana recreationally and it would establish a statewide authority to regulate all categories of cannabis, including hemp. On Wednesday, Honolulu Mayor Rick Blangiardi, Prosecutor Steve Alm, and the police chiefs of Hawaii's four major counties joined forces to speak out against that measure.

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Local Kauaī News – Friday February 9, 2024

Kauai Police responded to a traffic incident Thursday morning about 11:45 on Kalena Street in Lihue where a man on a mobility scooter was struck by a vehicle while crossing the street in a crosswalk. The victim, a 70-year-old man of Līhu'e, was transported to the Wilcox Memorial Hospital with serious injuries. He currently remains at the hospital in stable condition. The driver of the vehicle, a 36-year-old woman of Līhu'e, did not report any injuries. She was arrested for the offense of Negligent Injury in the First Degree and released pending investigation. Police closed Kalena Street in both directions for approximately one hour as officers with KPD's Traffic Safety Section conducted an on-scene investigation. The investigation remains ongoing. Anyone who may have witnessed the crash is urged to call Officer Himon-gala at 808-241-1617. Those wishing to remain anonymous can provide information by submitting a tip to Crime Stoppers Kauai at cskauai.org

On the Big Island Authorities tell us A magnitude 5.7 earthquake and multiple smaller aftershocks struck the Kau coast this morning, but did not generate a tsunami. The U.S. Geological Survey said the quake struck at 10:06 a.m. and was centered 2.8 miles northwest of Pahala at a depth of about 21.5 miles. The earthquake was followed by several aftershocks, the largest of which was magnitude 3.3, according to USGS. The USGS and the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center initially said the quake was magnitude 6.3 but the USGS subsequently updated the data.

Governor Josh Green says the compensation fund for families who lost loved ones in Lahaina is currently at 175-million dollars. In a news conference, Green said the One Ohana Initiative has received contributions from the State, Maui County, Kamehameha Schools, HECO and more. Green said the first fund will be available to families who lost a loved one due to the fire or experienced significant personal injuries. The families will be eligible to receive one-point-five million dollars. The effort will officially launch March 1st and anyone who accepts payouts will have to agree not to file a lawsuit against those who've participated in the fund, like Maui County or Hawaiian Electric.

There's a chance the Eddie could go within the next week. Officials have issued a yellow alert for the Eddie Aikau Big Wave Invitational on Oahu's north shore. With a large swell in the forecast, the prestigious surfing competition is on standby, possibly until Friday of next week. The waiting period started on December 14th and runs through March 12th. Conditions need to be just right. Last year, the Eddie was held for the first time since 2016. Honolulu lifeguard Luke Shepardson beat out defending champion John John Florence and other pro surfers. Shepardson has been invited back to defend his title.

Billboards haven't been legal in Hawaii for 112 years, but some lawmakers are hoping to change that. The state legislature is reviewing a Senate bill that seeks to relax the billboard ban. If passed, advertisements would be allowed on billboards, digital signs, and wallsapes only in the New Aloha Stadium Entertainment District. Proponents say two-and-a-half-million-dollars could be generated each year off just one advertisement. Critics are worried about it leading to what they call "visual clutter" or "visual noise."

An 18-year-old woman's car is totaled after a collision with a bull in Kailua-Kona. The woman says it

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happened Monday night, when the bull rammed her driver's side door. The animal, estimated to be two-thousand pounds, crumpled the car and left fur in the windows. The driver has bruises and suffered whiplash. The bull died after the collision. It's not clear how the bull got loose or where it came from.

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Local Kauaʻi News – Monday February 12, 2024

First responders rescued a 63-year-old Florida woman on the Hanakāpīʻai Trail in Hāʻena on Saturday, Feb. 10. At about 2:20 PM Sat. The woman fell 20 feet and sustained head injuries. Upon arrival, first responders loaded the hiker onto Air 1 and transported her to the Princeville Airport to awaiting AMR and KFD personnel. She was then transported to Wilcox hospital.

Our Kauai Police Department is urging our community to take precautions against vehicle break-ins. Recently, there has been a surge in vehicle break-in incidents at the trailheads of popular hiking spots in the Kapaʻa and North Shore areas. These incidents typically involve breaking into parked vehicles to steal valuable items left behind by unsuspecting victims. Common targets include electronic devices, wallets, purses and other valuables that are easily visible within the vehicle. Important safety tips to protect yourself and your property include:

- Do Not Leave Valuables in Your Vehicle

- Park in Well-Lit and Visible Areas

- Lock Your Vehicle: Always lock your vehicle and close all windows before leaving

- Report Suspicious Activity immediately by calling KPD Dispatch at 808-241-1711. If it is an emergency, call 911.

The Hawaii Tourism Authority is hoping for more cash from the state legislature. It is asking to increase its budget by nine-million-dollars, add 14 staff positions, and raise the salaries of its top executives. The HTA wants 69-million-dollars for the 2025 fiscal year. But, 60-million-dollars for the HTA, included in Governor Josh Green's administrative budget, was already approved. HTA Board Chair Mufi Hannemann says another one of the main goals for this legislative session is to oppose any effort to have the HTA eliminated, diminished, or absorbed by another state department.

The Eddie Aikau Big Wave Invitational is a no go after a red alert was issued today. Some of the world's best surfers have been on standby, ready to converge on Oahu's north. Officials say in order for 'The Eddie' to take place, wave face heights must consistently reach 40 feet. Eddie-sized swells were predicted for Thursday, but the event won't happen this week now. 'The Eddie' has only taken place ten times since 1985

The Hawaii Department of Education is falling far short of its mandate to buy more locally-produced food. The DOE's goal is to spend 30-percent of its food budget on locally grown and produced products. But, officials say it would require a five-fold spending increase to achieve that by 2030. Last year, locally-sourced food products accounted for a little more than six-point-one-percent of the DOE's spending. That was slightly down from the six-point-two-percent reported in 2022.

State lawmakers are reviewing a bill that would allow advertising and marketing on and inside the Hawaii Convention Center. Similar to a stadium or arena, it would also allow naming rights to be sold to create revenue. Hawaii Tourism Authority Interim President and CEO Daniel Naho'opi'i says, according to a study, the advertising would bring in 400-thousand to 500-thousand-dollars in its first year, equating to about 13-million-dollars in 20 years. The bill would also make the Hawaii Convention Center exempt from requirements regarding concessions on public property. The state

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Senate Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism Committee heard testimony on the bill last Thursday and is scheduled to vote on it tomorrow afternoon.

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Local Kauaïi News – Tuesday February 13, 2024

Here on Kauai Two passengers have been detained by police after getting into a midair fist fight on a Southwest Airlines flight from Oakland, California to Lihue. Witnesses say the men exchanged punches about an hour into the flight on Monday. A video posted to social media shows the fight, then passengers and crew members trying to separate the two men by getting between them. It's not clear if either passenger will be charged. It's also not clear if either of the men have pressed charges against one another.

Officials have announced that repairs for the Vidinha Stadium track and field were completed ahead of schedule. The facility will reopen to the public tomorrow, Feb. 14. Mahalo. The stadium track and field was scheduled to be closed for temporary repairs until March 1st.

On Maui Authorities have identified another person confirmed to have died in the Lahaina fire disaster – raising the official death toll to 101. The latest fire victim is identified as 76-year-old Paul Kasprzycki of Lahaina. Kasprzycki was one of the three people whose names remained on the Maui Police Department's "credible list of missing/unaccounted for individuals."

A bill aiming to expand SNAP eligibility won't be moving forward. Committee members deferred action on Senate Bill 21-35 during a recent hearing at the Capitol. If it had been passed, it could have expanded eligibility, helping more families afford food. Manager of the Social Impact Policy at the Hawaii Public Health Institute Nate Hix said he hopes to find ways to make a "more robust push" for the bill's passage next year.

On Oahu Three suspects accused of murdering a ten-year-old girl will remain behind bars without bail. A judge denied the suspects bail when they made their initial court appearance on Monday. One of the suspects asked to be released so she could continue seeing her doctor during her pregnancy. The girl was found dead last Thursday. The case was reclassified from an unattended death to a murder after signs of significant trauma were found on her body. The suspects, the girl's legal guardians, were arrested the following day. They are facing the charges of second-degree murder, kidnapping, conspiracy to commit kidnapping, and unlawful imprisonment.

The trial of accused crime lord Mike Miske is back in session. The trial resumed on Monday, after a week-long break was ordered because a juror fell ill. Sarah Maile Tufele, the ex-girlfriend of Wayne Miller, who was identified as Miske's "right-hand man," took the witness stand. Tu-fele says Miske used the messaging app What's App to communicate with her when he thought Miller was talking to the feds. Some of those messages were shown in court, including one she says was a threat Miske made against she and her son after he found out Miller was indeed cooperating with federal investigators.

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Local Kauaʻi News – Wednesday February 14, 2024

There will be no Hanalei Bridge closure from today Valentine's day (Feb 14) to Presidents day. The work will resume on 2/20/24 (Tuesday 11pm to 5:30am Weds). We are told the Tuesday Feb 20th closure, weather permitting, should be the final overnight closure for this phase of the the Hanalei Bridge Repair project.

From Maui Calls for intermediate housing on Maui are growing as costs to house wildfire survivors in hotels increase. One man who lost his home in Lahaina last August, Sanford Hill, has been staying in hotels for several months. While the government is paying for it, he says a bill recently showed up in his email, revealing it is costing more than 15-thousand-dollars per month just to house him alone. The bill from the Royal Lahaina shows a daily charge of 354-dollars. With taxes and fees factored in, that's about 500-dollars per day. At this time, nearly 49-hundred wildfire survivors are living in 16 hotels on Maui.

Authorities want to remind residents to stay vigilant after a man in Hilo was arrested and charged for stealing mail. Keoni Paulino was taken into custody last Thursday in connection with a reported mail theft in November of 2023. Officials said he stole someone's mailbox, including the victim's checks and was caught depositing one and forging the victim's signature. Paulino was charged with several crimes including second degree theft and identity theft.

Today, the state Senate will consider a bill that would change Hawaii's regulations for firearm ammunition. If the bill is passed, people younger than the age of 21 would no longer be allowed to own, posses, and control ammunition. Hunting enthusiasts are protesting the bill, saying it would restrict keiki from hunting and learning how to handle guns at a young age. The Senate is scheduled to hear the bill at three p.m., along with another bill that would amend the prohibition of assault weapons to include assault rifles and some other types of guns.

State lawmakers are considering a bill that would make it easier for someone to become a teacher in Hawaii. A person with an associate's degree or high school diploma would be allowed to become a teacher after completing certain additional course work. Proponents say it would be a way to solve Hawaii's teacher shortage. But, opponents of the bill question if the newly eligible people would actually be qualified to become teachers. The bill is supported by the state Department of Education and Hawaii Teacher Standards Board.

Hawaiian Electric officials are ensuring the public that the company is financially stable despite the mounting costs associated with the Maui wildfires. That's what Scott DeGhetto, one of the company's top executives, said during a conference call with investors on Tuesday. He reports the utility holding company Hawaiian Electric Industries Incorporated finished last year with about 137-million-dollars in cash. And, the utility subsidiary has 106-million-dollars. But, some doubt how the company will hold up financially in the future. Hawaiian Electric is named in more than 100 lawsuits claiming the company's equipment started the Lahaina wildfire, which is now confirmed to have killed 101 people.

The last Pearl Harbor survivor has passed away at 102 years old. Sterling Cale was hospitalized last

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month and passed away on January 20th at his home in Aiea. On the day Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, Cale was a 20-year-old hospital pharmacist mate assigned to the U.S. Naval Hospital. He also served in World War Two, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War.

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Local Kauaʻi News – Thursday February 15, 2024

On Oahu The Navy and state Department of Health and the Environmental Protection Agency are working to develop an Extended Drinking Water Monitoring Plan. This comes after the Navy got a team of "drinking water experts" to investigate the water at the Joint Base-Pearl Harbor Hickam after residents were complaining. The "Swarm Team" will "reinforce the Navy's commitment" to finding the cause of the petroleum hydrocarbons that were detected, and create a plan to address it. The Navy said it, and the DOH, will be collecting more water samples from homes this week. According to a news release, the Navy's water system continues to meet federal and state safe-water drinking standards.

on Oahu The trial of accused crime boss Mike Miske is now shifting toward alleged chemical attacks on rival nightclubs. Miske is the former owner of the M Nightclub on Restaurant Row. On Wednesday, the court heard testimony from Bryan Yoshida, the former co-owner of The District and Ginza nightclubs. Yoshida says he met with Miske after posting something to social media that Miske took offense to. Yoshida says, during their conversation, he was assaulted by another man while Miske berated him. A few days later, chemicals were released in both The District and Ginza nightclubs on back-to-back nights.

Also On Oahu The Hawaii Department of Health is confirming five cases of whooping cough. The five infected people are all members of the same household who visited Hawaii from the mainland. Officials confirm the family stayed at a hotel on Oahu, but haven't named the hotel. All five people were not vaccinated against whooping cough, and one child from the household ended up hospitalized. These are Hawaii's first confirmed cases of whooping cough, also called pertussis, since last March.

A new bill will allow ads on the outside of the Hawaii Convention Center. The senate bill, which is titled "Relating To The Convention Center," was passed on Tuesday. It allows corporations or other entities to pay to have their name or logo on the convention center. SB 31-97 was also approved on Tuesday, which will allow advertisements on the new Aloha Stadium, as long as they face inward and don't include moving images.

A bill that would legalize recreational marijuana use for adults in Hawaii has passed its first vote in the state legislature. On Tuesday, it was passed by the state Senate Health and Judiciary Committees. Just one senator voted no on the bill. State Attorney General Anne Lopez wrote the bill, which is also supported by Governor Josh Green. The bill next heads for two more Senate committees for review, before going before the full Senate.

Also on Oahu Three family members accused of killing a ten-year-old foster child at a home in Wahiawa have been indicted on murder charges. On Wednesday, indictments were issued to a married man and woman, along with the woman's mother. If convicted, they could face life in prison without the possibility of parole, since the indictment says the murder was "especially heinous, atrocious or cruel." The trio was arrested and charged last Friday and remain behind bars without bail. The girl was found dead at her home on January 18th. Investigators say she was emaciated, had

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broken teeth, open sores and the bridge of her nose had a large fracture. The Honolulu Medical Examiner's Office says she died from multiple effects of prolonged child abuse and neglect, and starvation.

A bill designed to keep Hawaii's teachers and other school employees safe from harassment is advancing in the state legislature. The bill was passed by the House Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs Committee this week. As initially written, the penalty for harassing an educational worker would have increased to a misdemeanor. But, the committee failed to keep the increased penalties when advancing the bill. However, the bill would also create new procedures and protocols for school employees to report harassment cases to their employers. That provision is still included.

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Local Kauaī News – Monday February 19, 2024

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Local Kauaʻi News – Tuesday February 20, 2024

The state's share of Maui wildfire recovery costs could exceed 600-million-dollars this year alone. That's according to a recent memo sent to colleagues by Senate Ways and Means Committee Chairman Donovan Dela Cruz. Governor Josh Green set aside 600-million-dollars in his financial plan for Maui recovery. But, that's the total set aside for the next four years. The state is paying an estimated one-million-dollars per day to assist Maui in cleanup, relief, and rebuilding efforts. Dela Cruz says it's not clear how much of the state's expenses will be reimbursed by FEMA.

Kapiolani Medical Center for Women and Children and its nurses are bringing in a federal mediator to resolve their ongoing contract dispute. The contract dispute led to a week-long strike in January, but the two sides still haven't been able to reach any kind of agreement. The federal mediator will try to negotiate a settlement. . The Hawaii Nurses Association is demanding higher pay, no mandatory overtime, and a minimum patient-to-staff ratio.

A bill that would increase how much marijuana someone could legally possess in Hawaii without a criminal penalty is facing strong opposition in the state House of Representatives. The bill would allow someone to possess up to an ounce of marijuana without facing a criminal charge. Instead, if caught with that amount, they would face a non-criminal violation and a 25-dollar fine. Last week, the bill advanced out of the House Judiciary Committee, but faced major backlash on the House floor. Opponents from both political parties say they're concerned it will be a gateway to hard drug use for young people, and will lead to low-level street dealing. Meanwhile, a bill that would legalize the recreational use of marijuana for adults is still moving through the state Senate.

The number of Japanese visitors coming to Hawaii is slowly growing, but it is still falling short of pre-pandemic levels last seen in 2019. Economists and tourism officials do not expect arrival totals to fully recover until 2026. Eric Takahata, managing director for Hawaii Tourism Japan, says numbers from the first quarter of this year are tracking to be about the same as the final quarter of last year. But, more arrivals are expected in the summer, with inflation in the U.S. expected to slow down. The gap between the dollar and the yen is also expected to narrow by the summer.

Having a college or trade school degree is becoming more valuable in Hawaii. A new report from Georgetown University says, by 2031, 70-percent of the job openings on the islands will require some type of postsecondary education, or at least some form of training beyond high school. Hawaii is also expected to have 624-thousand jobs by 2031, compared with 591-thousand in 2021. And, in 2031, there is expected to be an average of 72-thousand job openings annually. Among them, an estimated 51-thousand are expected to require postsecondary credentials.

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Local Kaua'i News – Wednesday February 21, 2024

In the ocean off Kauai A man was forced to abandon his vessel about 2:30 Tuesday afternoon after it caught fire off the shore of Lydgate Park. According to the U.S. Coast Guard Station Kaua'i, the man was traveling to O'ahu on his 35-foot fishing boat called the "Happy Hunter" when it caught fire as it was being escorted to Honolulu. The sole occupant of the vessel on fire safely escaped to the escort boat. According to the Coast Guard, when they arrived on scene the boat was completely burned. It is unknown at this time what caused the fire.

On Maui The state Department of Health has completed its first round of testing and reports Lahaina's air quality is safe. Air samples were taken at four monitoring stations between January 13th and January 24th. The air was tested for the presence of asbestos and metals, like arsenic. The DOH and EPA recently installed 51 real-time air monitors in the Lahaina area.

On Oahu The 17-year-old hunter accused of shooting a man to death at a ranch in Makaha last weekend has been charged with murder. On Tuesday, the boy was also charged with terroristic threatening and gun-related crimes. Witnesses tell police, the victim, a 39-year-old man, was arguing with a group of hunters about their dog attacking his steer at O-hiki-lolo Ranch. The argument ended after one of the hunters shot the man, before the alleged shooter and the rest of the group ran away.

Emme Tomimbang Burns, a veteran broadcast journalist in Hawaii has passed away at 73. Tomimbang Burns died on Monday at the Queen's Medical Center in Honolulu while undergoing open heart surgery. She's considered a pioneer in radio and TV in Hawaii and had decades of experience in local broadcasting at several radio and TV stations around the islands. Tomimbang Burns also formed her own production company, Emme Tomimbang Multi-Media Enterprises.

The state Department of Health has completed its first round of testing and reports Lahaina's air quality is safe. Air samples were taken at four monitoring stations between January 13th and January 24th. The air was tested for the presence of asbestos and metals, like arsenic. The DOH and EPA recently installed 51 real-time air monitors in Lahaina and Olowalu.

Experts say humpback whale season is in full swing. Whale watchers say it's been an active season so far this year. The owner of Ocean Outfitters on Oahu's North Shore says there have been many opportunities for guests to spot whales. Also, during the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary's most recent whale count, volunteers tallied over 300 whales within a 15-minute period from shorelines across the state. Another whale count is scheduled for February 24th.

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Local Kauaī News – Thursday February 22, 2024

Kauai police have released autopsy results for a man who died in an explosion at a home in Kilauea earlier this month. Investigators say the 37-year-old man, Jasper Gunsell, died on February 12th, while making a homemade explosive. After reviewing the autopsy results, police say there was no foul play, adding that the death was accidental. Those findings support the findings of the initial investigation at the scene. In light of the circumstances surrounding Gunsell's death, KPD would like to remind the public of the inherent dangers of creating and handling homemade explosives. Such activities are not only illegal under Hawai'i law but, as this tragic incident illustrates, they pose a severe risk to the individual involved and the wider community. KPD also encourages the public to report any suspicious activity occurring in their neighborhood by calling KPD Dispatch at 808-241-1711. Those wishing to remain anonymous can provide information to Crime Stoppers Kauai at cskauai.org

A bill gaining support among state lawmakers would bring back free breakfast and lunch for all public-school students. But, financial concerns might keep it from passing. The state Department of Education estimates providing free meals to all keiki would cost 32-million-dollars annually. Supporters say, if the state could do it during the pandemic, it could be done again. The bill has passed two readings so far and will next be heard by the House Finance Committee tomorrow afternoon.

On Oahu The tap water at seven public elementary schools in the Pearl Harbor area is showing detections of petroleum-based chemicals. Test results show each school had recent, but intermittent detections of total petroleum hydrocarbons. Advocates for the area are urging the Navy to warn the public, but officials say the water is safe to use. In late 2021 and early 2022, several other public schools could not use their tap water after the Red Hill fuel spills that impacted the Navy's drinking water system. The Navy is now enlisting the help of a "swarm team" to try to pinpoint what's causing a spike in detections of total petroleum hydrocarbons. The Navy says fuel is not the cause.

Also on Oahu The Department of Transportation says it's seeing fewer people running red lights at intersections thanks to the Red-Light Safety Pilot Program. The program still has another eight months left, but officials said they're already looking to expand it. The DOT also said the cameras could soon be used to cite people who are speeding. According to the program's director Ed Sniffen, they've issued about 20-thousand citations since November of 2022, but they are seeing a downward trend in three of the five most problematic intersections. Sniffen said if the speed camera pilot is approved it would be exactly like the Red-Light Safety Cam Program where HPD reviews the videos and issues citations.

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Local Kauaʻi News – Friday February 23, 2024

Here on Kauai First responders rescued a 34-year-old Michigan woman near the Hanakāpīʻai Trail in Hāʻena on Thursday, Feb. 22. According to a preliminary report, first responders located the hiker walking to the Hanakāpīʻai Beach landing zone at approximately 1:45 p.m. The hiker fell about 20 to 30 feet on the trail and sustained injuries to her head and other parts of her body. Upon arrival, first responders loaded the hiker onto Air 1 and treated then transported her to the Princeville Airport. AMR personnel continued treatment of the hiker before transporting her to Wilcox Medical Center.

Also on Kauai Officials from the Department of Parks and Recreation (DOPR) are urging the public to be vigilant after several trees were recently found burned at Lydgate Beach Park, ʻAnini Beach Park, and Anahola Beach Park. According to Kauaʻi Fire Department Chief Michael Gibson. “Arson in our parks, with the ignition of trees, has the potential to quickly escalate into uncontrolled wildfires, putting lives, property, and the surrounding area in jeopardy,” “Arson is a serious crime with severe consequences. It poses an immediate threat to lives, properties, and the environment, and undermines community safety. Perpetrators will face significant penalties, including imprisonment and fines,” said Kauaʻi Police Department Chief Todd Raybuck. Anyone with information regarding these incidents is encouraged to contact KPD Dispatch at 808-241-1711. Those wishing to remain anonymous can provide information to Crime Stoppers Kauaʻi at [cskauai.org](https://www.cskauai.org)

On Oahu The FBI is investigating an alleged murder for hire plot connected with the upcoming public corruption trial of former Honolulu prosecuting attorney Keith Kaneshiro. The alleged plot on Oahu targets the lives of federal judge J. Michael Seabright and Special Prosecutor Michael Wheat. Seabright recused himself from the case in January. One of the defendants in the public corruption case, attorney Sheri Tanaka, is named as an alleged co-conspirator in the new murder plot investigation. Tanaka has been free on bail since her arrest on suspicion of bribery in October of 2022. But, a hearing to review the conditions of her bail is happening today. Last week, a probation officer filed a report, saying Tanaka "may pose a danger to any other person in the community."

The Hawaii Department of Education is bracing for what is forecast to be significant budget cuts. This week, the state Senate told all state departments to prepare two budgets. One will factor in cuts of ten-percent to general funds, and other factors in a 15-percent reduction. That means the DOE and its 258 public schools would be losing between 213-million and 320-million-dollars. But, that's not all. The DOE is also losing 639-million-dollars in pandemic-related federal aid by the end of September. That means a loss of about 170-million-dollars in additional funding per year moving forward.

The travel analysts at Tripadvisor have released their World's Best Beaches for 2024. Tripadvisor says the top three beaches in the U.S. are Ka'anapali Beach - Lahaina, Hawaii; Siesta Beach - Siesta Key, Florida; and Poipu [[poy pew]] Beach Park - Poipu, Hawaii.

A class-action lawsuit is being filed against what are referred to as "aggressive" cosmetic salespeople. Honolulu-based Bickerton Law Group is suing individuals and businesses it accuses of using unfair and deceptive trade practices through pushy sales tactics. The goal of the lawsuit is to

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get back money people spent on unwanted purchases of cosmetic products on Oahu and the neighbor islands. The law firm says there are several businesses that give victims, often elderly women, free skin treatments on the sidewalk, then aggressively pressure them into buying products once they're inside the store.

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Local Kauaʻi News – Monday February 26, 2024

On Kauai The next in a series of town hall meetings hosted by Kauai Council Chair Mel Rapozo will be held this evening Feb 26th, from 5:30 till 7 pm at the Council Chambers in Lihue.. All are invited to express their concerns in preparation for the upcoming County Budget deliberations beginning in late March.

Also on Kauai tonite there will be another Town Hall Meeting State of Hawaii House Representative Luke Evslin The meeting will be held from 5 - 7pm The Ulu Room 4286 Rice street, Lihue Kauai. Evslin will deliver an update on the 2024 Legislative session. In addition Evslin, the governor's coordinator on homelessness, John Mizuno. will deliver an update on efforts to reduce chronic homelessness and provide housing solutions for communities across the state. Also present will be House Majority Leader Nadine Nakamura.

Here on Kauai A 55-year-old man Kalaheo man suffered fatal injuries after being struck by a vehicle on Po'ipū Road Saturday morning. Feb. 24 at approximately 8:50 a.m., a 2004 Toyota multi-purpose vehicle with two occupants was traveling westbound on Po'ipū Road in the vicinity of Kiahuna Shopping Center. The vehicle veered off the roadway and struck the man as he was walking along the westbound shoulder. Po'ipū Road was closed in both directions for approximately 30 minutes while the Kauaʻi Police Department's Traffic Safety Section conducted an on-scene investigation. Speed and impairment are not suspected factors in the crash, however, the investigation remains ongoing. This is Kauaʻi's second traffic fatality of 2024. Anyone who may have witnessed the crash is urged to call Officer Hanna at 808-241-1615. Those wishing to remain anonymous can provide information submitting a tip to Crime Stoppers Kauaʻi at [cskauai.org](https://www.cskauai.org).

Also Here on Kauai, Kauaʻi Fire Department firefighters extinguished a structure fire in 'Ele'ele on Sunday, Feb. 25. The structure was under construction at the time and was unoccupied. No injuries were reported. Firefighters were dispatched to a report of a structure fire on O-kupu Street in 'Ele'ele shortly before 12:45 a.m. on Sunday. fire personnel arrived at a fully engulfed structure at approximately 12:50 a.m. First responders later extinguished the fire, and cleared the scene at approximately 12:20 p.m. after putting out the last remaining hot spots. The estimated cost to rebuild is \$20 million. The Kauaʻi Police Department and the Kauaʻi Fire Department are conducting a joint investigation to determine the cause of the fire. Anyone with information about this incident is encouraged to contact KPD Dispatch at 808-241-1711. Those wishing to remain anonymous can provide information by submitting a tip to Crime Stoppers Kauaʻi at [cskauai.org](https://www.cskauai.org). Tipsters to Crime Stoppers are eligible for monetary rewards.

On Maui There's an increased police presence at Maui's Baldwin High today due to an alleged school shooting threat. School officials reached out to police after a photo of the threat, which was written on a toilet seat, circulated on social media. It said there would a shooting at "BHS" between Monday and Thursday. It didn't explicitly name Maui's Baldwin High School, but there will be more Maui police officers on the school's campus out of an abundance of caution. Officials say its unclear where the threatening message was found. An investigation is ongoing.

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On Oahu the woman who was attacked with a liquid chemical near Ala Moana Center is still hospitalized after more than a month. But, the Oahu Chinese Chamber of Commerce says the 25-year-old's condition has stabilized. The victim, a schoolteacher, has also been able to make contact with her parents, who are in rural China. The 29-year-old man accused of attacking the woman remains behind bars without bail on Oahu.

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Local Kaua*ʻ*i News – Tuesday February 27, 2024

On Kauai, Good news for Cookie lovers, Girl Scout cookie season has started. For those who preordered from Girl Scouts, it's getting to be time for the scouts to deliver the orders. Booth sales are also an opportunity to pick up or order more cookies. Another way of finding Girl Scout cookies is online through the Girl Scout website at [girlscouts.org](https://www.girlscouts.org)

On Oahu The Honolulu Police Department has fired three officers accused of causing a major injury crash in Makaha in 2021. The HPD confirms the officers, who are awaiting trial, were fired earlier this month. All three men have filed grievances against the department and their terminations are not final. The officers are accused of chasing a car from a beach park without their lights and sirens on. Six people inside the car on Oahu were injured in a rollover crash. The officers are also accused of continuing to drive after the crash and not immediately rendering or calling for medical aid.

On Maui Maui police officers are getting retroactive COVID hazard pay as part of a settlement that was reached with Maui County. The State of Hawaii Organization of Police Officers said they believe the agreement honors the "risks taken by those who worked through the pandemic" and "provides meaningful financial compensation." The union also said a settlement avoids "prolonged delays." Hours worked between March 4th 2020 and March 25th 2022 qualify for hazard pay. Members who worked patrol will get percent hazard while non-patrol assignment will be eligible for 15-percent. Payments are expected by early May.

On Oahu The Honolulu Zoo wants its patrons to beware of a ticket scam. Zoo officials have found online ads, claiming to offer tickets "at a bargain price" for the zoo's 40th anniversary. It also claims the tickets are valid for a year. The zoo says these tickets are all fake. The Honolulu Zoo only sells tickets at its front entrance and nowhere else.

Also on Oahu A trial is underway for a 7-Eleven employee who is accused of chopping a man's hand off in Waikiki in 2022. An Oahu jury indicted Jason Walker on one count of second-degree attempted murder in 2022 and Jason Walker pleaded not guilty. He was working as a clerk at the convenience store when the incident happened. According to police, Walker got into an argument with the victim, Alexander Dejarnette inside the store. When Dejarnette left through the front door, Walker walked out a back door and met him in the front, confronted him and started swinging a sword. Dajarnette held his arms up to block the blade, resulting in his injuries. If convicted, Walker will face life in prison with the possibility of parole.

On Oahu The long-awaited public corruption trial of former Honolulu prosecuting attorney Keith Kaneshiro may be delayed again. That's after one of Kaneshiro's alleged co-conspirators, attorney Sheri Tanaka, was accused of being part of a murder-for-hire plot. Tanaka, accused of trying to arrange to have a federal judge and prosecutor killed, is now trying to have the trial pushed back again. Tanaka's lawyer says she can no longer have an impartial jury in Hawaii, since the new murder-for-hire probe has gotten so much publicity. The lawyer also says Tanaka is no longer prepared to go to trial because the new investigation has been a distraction, and because the FBI seized his client's phone and laptop last month.

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Local Kauaī News – Wednesday February 28, 2024

Here on Kauai One person is injured after a tour helicopter crashed on a remote beach on Kauai. The helicopter with a pilot and four passengers onboard crashed on Hono-pu Beach at 1:40 Tuesday afternoon. The helicopter belongs to Jack Harter Helicopters, based in Lihue. One passenger was taken to a hospital with a back injury. The cause of the crash is not clear.

Also on Kauai Investigators are not ruling out arson as the cause of a fire that destroyed an under-construction affordable housing complex on Kauai. The building near Port Allen Harbor in south Kauai went up in flames early Sunday. It's a big loss to Hawaii's affordable housing stock and taxpayer dollars as well. The government subsidized project was going to have two-dozen two and three-bedroom apartments. The cost to rebuild the complex, which had been under construction for months, is 20-million-dollars.

On Maui Governor Josh Green is again threatening to ban short-term vacation rentals in West Maui. Green says he would consider taking that action if the owners of the 175 rental units in West Maui don't commit to renting to wildfire survivors by April 1st. The governor is trying to find wildfire survivors long-term housing in West Maui, even if they don't qualify for FEMA housing assistance. More than 17-hundred people who were displaced from their homes on Maui in August are still living in hotels. Green says he would consider a "temporary moratorium" On Maui on short-term rentals if there isn't enough housing available in West Maui.

Two Hawaii events are in the running for USA Today's Readers Choice Awards. The Waikiki Spam Jam and the Kauai Poke FEstival in Koloa are among 20 festivals that were nominated by an expert panel. Readers have until March 18th to vote, and you can vote once a day. You can vote on 10best.usatoday.com

Governor Josh Green is officially launching the "One Ohana Fund." The 175-million dollar fund will offer money to the families of those who were injured or died in the Maui wildfires. In exchange they agreed not to pursue litigation. Applications can be submitted starting March 1st and families will be eligible for one-point-five-million dollars. During a news conference, Green said "we have a moral obligation to help people here" adding that families are under no pressure to accept the payment.

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Local Kaua'i News – Thursday February 29, 2024

Here on Kauai First responders rescued three hikers near the Kalalau Trail on Wednesday, Feb. 28. Kaua'i Fire Department personnel were dispatched to a report of two male visitors from Georgia, ages 73 and 41, who fell from the Kalalau Trail at approximately 12:30 p.m. on Wednesday. While on their way to the scene, first responders were also informed of a female bystander who had assisted the two hikers who fell. Upon arrival, rescue personnel located two hikers about 200 feet below the trail. One had apparent injuries to the head and body, while the other was the female who did not report any injuries. Once the first two hikers were rescued, rescue personnel found the third hiker on a hillside. He was assessed for apparent head injuries, airlifted, and transported to Princeville Airport to awaiting American Medical Response and KFD personnel. The male hikers were then transported to Wilcox Medical Center.

Hawaii has several beaches with chronic water pollution issues and one of them is on Kauai. That's detailed in a new report from the Surfrider Foundation. The 2023 "Hawaii Water Quality Report" says stream mouths, beaches with freshwater outlets, and bays without a lot of circulation usually have higher bacteria levels than other areas. It also says several waterways documented to have problems in the past are still areas of concern. They include Kahaluu on Oahu and the Nawiliwili Stream Mouth on Kauai.

On Oahu A bribery and corruption trial against Honolulu's former top prosecutor isn't being delayed. This comes despite an ongoing investigation into allegations about a defendant threatening the judge who had been overseeing the trial. The allegations involved a murder-for-hire, which led the judge to remove himself from the trial. The new judge on Oahu has ruled there will be one trial for all six-co-defendants in the case. Jury selection will begin on March 12th in Honolulu. Former prosecuting Attorney Keith Kaneshiro is being accused of accepting bribes in exchange for prosecuting a former employee of an engineering firm. Five others have also been indicted in the case.

Some state lawmakers are looking to make Hawaii's gun laws stricter by banning .50 caliber bullets. The bill would make the largest round of ammunition that is generally available to Americans illegal in Hawaii. State Senator Karl Rhoads backs the bill, saying .50 caliber guns and bullets have no place in civilian life. But, critics call the proposal unconstitutional. The bill would also expand Hawaii's ban on magazines that carry more than ten bullets to all guns. As it stands, the law only applies to pistols.

On Maui, Maui County has selected the Central Maui Landfill as the permanent dump site for Lahaina wildfire ash and debris. The site is east of Puu-nene and next to the current landfill. County officials reached the decision in part after reviewing responses to a survey taken by residents earlier this month. Many Lahaina residents had expressed not wanting to have the debris in West Maui, even if it would mean more traffic when it is hauled to central Maui. Maui County must next finalize the land acquisition and coordinate with state and federal agencies for traffic mitigation and funding needs.

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Local Kaua*ʻ*i News by Wilma Lee Kapp
2024 - Quarter 1 – January – February - March**

Local Kaua*ʻ*i News – Friday March 1, 2024

Here on Kauai sadly A 20 year old female visitor from Idaho died Wednesday afternoon after being pulled from waters off Lumaha'i Beach. At approximately 3 p.m. on Feb. 28, first responders were dispatched to Lumaha'i Beach for a swimmer in distress. According to a preliminary report, the victim had been swimming when she was suddenly swept out into deeper water. First responders located the unresponsive woman in the water at approximately 3:10 p.m. She was brought to shore by Ocean Safety Bureau personnel. Rescuers immediately began to administer CPR until medics arrived on scene and took over advanced resuscitation efforts. The woman was transported to the Wilcox Memorial Hospital, where she was pronounced dead. An autopsy is pending to determine the exact cause of death, but foul play is not suspected.

Also here on Kauai the next in the series of the island wide town Halls hosted by Kauai Council Chair Mel Rapozo will be held tonight, Fri. March 1st, at the Kapaa Neighborhood Center from 5:30 till 7 pm. The purpose of the town halls is to gather your concerns regarding the upcoming County Budget deliberations which will begin in late March.. All residents are invited.

Also Here on Kauai First responders rescued three hikers near the Kalalau Trail on Wednesday, Feb. 28. Kaua'i Fire Department personnel were dispatched to a report of two male visitors from Georgia, ages 73 and 41, who fell from the Kalalau Trail. While on their way to the scene, first responders were also informed of a female bystander who had assisted the two hikers who fell. Rescue personnel located two hikers about 200 feet below the trail. One had apparent injuries to the head and body, while the other was a female who did not report any injuries. Once the first two hikers were rescued, rescue personnel found the third hiker on a hillside. He was assessed for apparent head injuries, airlifted, and transported to Princeville Airport. The male hikers were then transported to Wilcox Medical Center.

Hawaii's visitor arrival and visitor spending totals were down in January. More than 763-thousand people visited the islands in January, which was three-point-six-percent fewer than in January of 2023. Visitor spending for the month reached one-point-eight-one-billion-dollars, which was down four-point-five-percent from January of 2023. The numbers were released Thursday, by the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism. They represent a continuing monthly decline in visitor arrivals and spending since the Maui wildfires last August.

As Maui wildfire recovery costs continue to soar, state lawmakers are demanding an explanation from Governor Josh Green and department leaders. Lawmakers spent part of their Thursday at a meeting, asking why a thousand dollars per day, per household, is being spent on hotel rooms for survivors, while schools and other state services are facing serious cuts. The budget for public schools has been impacted by about 80-million-dollars, the most of any department. State Senator Donna Kim wondered why the state didn't use tent cities or trailers that FEMA has used for emergency housing after other disasters in the past, rather than putting so many people in costly hotels. Last month, Governor Green asked the state legislature to approve 412-million-dollars in immediate emergency funding. The request had been 50-million-dollars, before FEMA announced it wasn't going to reimburse the state for housing hundreds of families in hotel rooms.

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2024 - Quarter 1 – January – February - March

Local Kauaʻi News – Monday March 4, 2024

Kauai Ocean Safety Bureau officials are advising no swimming or ocean activities at Salt Pond and Poʻipū beach parks, and south shore beaches, due to reports of Box Jellyfish. Beachgoers are advised to follow all posted warning signs. For up-to-date information about ocean conditions and ocean safety, please speak to a county lifeguard at any lifeguard station.

Here on Kauai the next in the series of the island wide town Halls hosted by Kauai Council Chair Mel Rapozo will be held tonight, Mon. March 3rd, at the Kalaheo Neighborhood Center from 5:30 till 7 pm. The purpose of the town halls is to gather your concerns regarding the upcoming County Budget deliberations which will begin in late March.. All residents are invited.

Also here on Kauai A male visitor died Friday afternoon after being pulled from waters off Allerton Beach. The victim has been identified as a 69-year-old male from Colorado. The victim was boogie boarding when he struck his head on a rock. Resuscitation efforts were unsuccessful. An autopsy is pending to determine the exact cause of death, but foul play is not suspected.

The Kauaʻi Police Department is asking for the public's help in locating a missing adult male. John A. Navarro, age 41, of Lihue, was reported missing on Thursday, Feb. 29, 2024. The reporting family member, who lives out of state, last spoke to Navarro via telephone on or about Wednesday, Jan. 24, 2024. Navarro is 5 feet 4 inches tall, weighs approximately 135 pounds and has brown eyes and black hair. He has his last name tattooed on his upper back and distinctive tattoos on his right shoulder and right hand. He is also known for doing shoreline fishing at the Nukoliʻi beach. Anyone with information about Navarro's whereabouts on Kauaʻi is urged to call KPD Dispatch at 241-1711. Those wishing to remain anonymous can provide information to Crime Stoppers Kauai by submitting a tip at cskauai.org

On Oahu Thirty people are okay after a 90-foot sailboat ran aground right off the coast of Waikiki. The group had to be rescued from the "Criterion" at about 3:30 Sunday afternoon, after it hit a reef some 500 yards offshore of Fort DeRussy. First responders and good Samaritans helped transfer the passengers to another boat and escorted them to Ala Wai Small Boat Harbor. There are no reports of injuries.

On the Big Island The future of the controversial Thirty Meter Telescope project is in jeopardy. The National Science Board has recommended capping the budget for the U.S. National Science Foundation's large telescope program at one-point-six million dollars. That only leaves enough money for the Thirty Meter Telescope in Hawaii or the Giant Magellan Telescope in Chile. The board has until May to determine which telescope project will move forward.

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Local Kaua'i News – Tuesday March 5, 2024

On Kauai, John A. Navarro, 41, has been located and is safe. Navarro, of Lihue, was reported missing on Thursday, Feb. 29, 2024. The Kaua'i Police Department thanks the community for their assistance.

Also here on Kauai Police responded to a medical call and administered Narcan to revive an unconscious woman last Tuesday. On Feb. 27 at approximately 2 p.m., police responded to a medical call that involved an unconscious woman. According to preliminary reports, a 54-year-old female resident of Kapa'a was found unresponsive by an acquaintance, who began performing CPR. Resuscitation efforts were unsuccessful and 9-1-1 was notified. KPD Officer Daniel Ball arrived on scene and recognized the victim was exhibiting the signs of an opioid overdose. Officer Ball administered one dose of Narcan but saw little improvement in the woman's condition. Officer Christian Kauai arrived shortly after Officer Ball and administered a second dose of Narcon to the woman. The woman regained consciousness and was transported to the Wilcox Memorial Hospital for further treatment. No other injuries were reported. Last week's successful overdose intervention is the third life saved by KPD officers within 60 days. Police Chief Todd Raybuck advises "If you suspect someone is suffering from a potential opioid overdose, please immediately call 9-1-1. Our utmost priority is to save lives,"

On Maui, Maui County officials are looking for the owners of 21 vehicles that were salvaged in Lahaina. The vehicles were recovered from the burn zone, all still intact with little to no visible outer damage. But, Maui County will not guarantee a warranty for the condition of the vehicles. The county is providing a chart of the vehicles' color, make, type, VIN and license plate numbers in hopes of reuniting them with their owners. Vehicles unclaimed by April 1st will be scrapped. Right now, they are being kept at a storage yard.

Hawaii's condo prices are the highest in the nation, and that's largely because of the state's strict building regulations. A new report from the University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization says building regulations inflate the cost of condo development by 58-percent. Monday's report says regulatory costs account for 387-thousand-dollars of the price of a new two-bedroom condo that sells for close to 670-thousand-dollars. UHERO says that figure represents twice the sales price in an "average state." Hawaii requires developers to help pay for infrastructure, which includes upgrading roads, sewers or electrical. If not, their permits won't be approved. The price of land, materials and labor in Hawaii is also the highest in the nation. Those costs all get passed on to home buyers.

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Local Kauaʻi News – Wednesday March 6, 2024

The annual blessing of the field season for teams of conservationists working against the clock to save numerous species of Hawaiian Honeycreepers from extinction was held March 1st. . The teams are trying to bring as many of the extremely endangered birds into safety as possible, while efforts to control avian malaria-carrying mosquitos ramp up. Once the disease threat is under control the hope is to return honeycreeper species to the wild in remote mountainous areas of our island. Governor Josh Green, and Kauaʻi Mayor Kawakami have both declared this The Year of the Forest Birds. That recognition along with Friday’s blessing is giving encouragement and hope to the teams working to save the birds.

Our Kauai Department of Parks and Recreation announces that registration for the county’s Spring Fun is scheduled through 4:30 p.m. today, March 6, on the county’s website. Enrollment is limited and will be handled on a first-come, first-served basis. The program runs from March 18 to March 22, from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and is open to children 5 to 11 years old. Program sites include the Līhuʻe neighborhood center and Kalāheo neighborhood center. The cost of enrollment is \$30 per child, and it does not include lunch

The Hawaii House of Representatives has passed a bill that would put an end to the planned redevelopment of Aloha Stadium. That would mean no new stadium and surrounding entertainment district. The bill, instead, calls for building a cheaper stadium on the U.H. Manoa campus, which the Rainbow Warriors' football team now calls home. Four-hundred-million-dollars in taxpayer funding has already been approved to redevelop Aloha Stadium in Halawa. The bill calls for that funding to be cancelled. Instead, 211-million-dollars would be reappropriated to U.H. to build a new stadium on its flagship campus.

The Hawaii House of Representatives has passed a bill that would expunge the marijuana-related arrests and convictions of more than 36-thousand people. Those people were arrested for possessing less than three grams of marijuana before the offense was decriminalized in 2019. The bill calls for them having all or part of their criminal records expunged at no cost through a state-initiated process. The bill was passed by the full House on Tuesday and now heads to the state Senate for consideration.

Dog owners in Hawaii are keeping tabs on a bill that would strike down a ban on dogs at most public parks in the state. Senate Bill 2565 was introduced by state Senator Chris Lee and is moving to the state House for consideration after surviving two Senate hearings. Lee says the bill will have penalties for owners who do not pick up after their pets. The bill has gained the support of the Hawaiian Humane Society. A member with the Hawaiian Humane Society says most city and county parks don't allow leashed dogs to be walked through the park, which is "a real disservice." The bill now needs House approval.

Salesforce is donating 150-million-dollars to hospitals in Hawaii. The donation, announced Tuesday, is one of the largest single private donations in Hawaii's history. Hawaii Pacific Health is getting 100-million-dollars and Hilo Medical Center is getting 50-million-dollars. Hawaii Pacific Health will use the

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money to create a so-called "healthcare campus of the future" at Honolulu Straub Medical Center. Hilo Medical Center will use its donation money for a family birthing center, ICU and neurosurgical program.

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Local Kauaīi News – Thursday March 7, 2024

On Kauai's east side First responders rescued a 25-year-old male California visitor in waters off Kapa'a on Tuesday, March 5. According to a preliminary report, firefighters with the Kapa'a fire station were dispatched to a report of a distressed swimmer in waters fronting the Pono Kai Resort shortly before 11:45 a.m. on Tuesday. Firefighters arrived shortly after and spotted the swimmer about 60 yards from shore. First responders entered the water with a rescue tube and retrieved the swimmer.

Kauaīi Island Utility Cooperative is among the first five cooperative utilities in the nation selected to move forward in the U.S. Department of Agriculture awards process for the Powering Affordable Clean Energy program. KIUC requested \$24.4 million in PACE funds to expand solar energy production by installing battery energy storage systems at solar facilities in Anahola, Kōloa and Port Allen. "The funding will help us further reduce reliance on fossil fuels during peak evening hours, improve grid reliability and resiliency, and help us move closer to our goal of 100% renewable energy by 2033," said KIUC's President and Chief Executive Officer, David Bissell.

Kauai Mayor Derek S.K. Kawakami invites the public to attend the State of the County Address on Thursday, March 14. The event will be held at 10 a.m. at the Līhu'e Civic Center Courtyard. Mayor Kawakami's 2024 State of the County Address will also be live-streamed online at The County of kauai's face book page, Hō'ike TV's YouTube page, and live on Hō'ike Kaua'i Community Television on channels 53 and 54. The State of the County will also be posted on the County's website following the event.

Also here on Kauai The Hawaiīi Department of Transportation notifies highway users of a full nightly closure of Kūhiō Highway in Wainiha beginning Monday, March 18, 2024, for the Wainiha Bridge Repair project. Closures will be nightly on a Monday through Thursday schedule from 10 p.m. to 5:30 a.m. the following day. The \$225,000 project will replace the bridge support and panel members of the Wainiha that have corroded over time. The closures will run for the week concluding on Friday morning March 22, 2024. Electronic message boards will be posted with closure information.

On Oahu The process of removing nearly 105-million gallons of fuel from the troubled Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility is complete. On Wednesday, the military's Joint Task Force Red Hill announced the last of the accessible residual fuel has been removed from the underground tanks. The defueling process officially began in October. The EPA and Hawaii Department of Health are now inspecting the facility. The next process to follow is closing the World War Two-era facility, which sits above a critical aquifer that supplies drinking water to most of southern Oahu.

As the spring break season approaches, the state Department of Health is urging travelers to be vigilant about measles. Hawaii has not recently had a measles outbreak, but public health officials are concerned about a recent rise in outbreaks on the mainland and internationally. As of the end of February, in six years. Hawaii has not had one case. But, about 15 percent of kindergarten students on the islands are not vaccinated against measles, which has some public health officials concerned about vulnerability to the population.

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Jaywalking is a step closer to no longer being considered a crime in Hawaii. On Wednesday, the state Senate passed a bill that would decriminalize jaywalking in situations where there is no immediate danger of causing a crash. The bill would also mean mandatory fines of at least 100 dollars for any driver caught speeding. The measure now moves to the state House for consideration.

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Local Kaua'i News – Friday March 8, 2024

Today state and federal officials announced that they will be deploying fire and wind sensors statewide. The sensors are designed to detect particles from fires. They will then alert will notify emergency officials, including fire departments. The new technology can sense smoke from fire and the particles that the smoke carries, alerting the authorities to enable firefighters to move more quickly to stop the fire spread. Each of the Hawaii counties will receive 20 sensors to place in areas they believe are more likely to have a wildfire occur. Makers of the sensors said they are working on satellite connectivity to operate them. In Hawaii they will only use cellular service, which went dark during the August 8 fires. Initial trials have already been done in 11 states but Hawaii is the testing ground for the latest version of this AI technology. The system housing the sensors is small and compact, able to sit on a utility pole or a traffic light, and can work in all weather conditions. The sensors are being provided to the state at no cost.

Sen. Brian Schatz announced on Tuesday that he secured \$394 million in new congressional directed spending in the first half of this year's government funding bill.

Some of the funding for Kaua'i include: • \$3.3 million for the County of Kaua'i to support the Kaua'i War Memorial Convention Hall;

• \$1.6 million for the Kaua'i County Housing Agency to support engineering and design of infrastructure to enable Kilauea Affordable Housing Subdivision;

• \$1.4 million for the Kaua'i County Housing Agency to support engineering and construction documents for the Waimea 400 affordable housing subdivision;

• \$1.8 million for the Kaua'i County Housing Agency to support engineering and construction documents for a new wastewater treatment plant;

The Hawaii Department of Education is planning to ramp up its spending on construction projects in the next three and a half months. The Department is in a race against time before the end of June. Late last year, the DOE faced backlash from state lawmakers after announcing it was planning to let 465-million-dollars in capital improvement funding lapse. There were delays in getting projects started, and it was not going to be able to spend all of the funding before the state deadline hit. The DOE is now presenting a more aggressive spending plan to the state Board of Education. It means the DOE is now trying to spend or allot close to 543-million-dollars in construction contracts by June 30th.

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Local Kaua*ʻ*i News – Monday March 11, 2024

Here on Kauai the last of the series of the island wide town Halls hosted by Kauai Council Chair Mel Rapozo will be held tonight, Mon. March 11th, at the Kekaha Neighborhood Center from 5:30 till 7 pm. The purpose of the town halls is to gather your concerns regarding the upcoming County Budget deliberations which will begin in late March.. All residents are invited.

Also on Kauai The VA Benefits Counselors assigned to the the Honolu VA Regional Office will be at the Kauai Veterans Center on The Veterans Highway tomorrow Tuesday March 12th from 9:30 until 2PM. The benefits Counselors will be available to answer benefit question and assist with the claim process.

On Kaua's south side A 33-year-old man suffered fatal injuries following a single vehicle traffic crash Friday night Mar. 8 At approximately 10 p.m., a 1991 Dodge truck with two occupants was traveling northbound on Maluhia Road when the vehicle left the roadway and struck a tree. The driver of the vehicle, a 33-year-old male resident of Līhu'e, suffered fatal injuries in the collision. The passenger, a 32-year-old female resident of Līhu'e, was treated at the scene by medics for non-life-threatening injuries. Maluhia Road was closed in both directions for approximately 3 hours while the Kaua*ʻ*i Police Department's Traffic Safety Section conducted an on-scene investigation. Speed and impairment appear to be suspected factors in the crash. This is Kaua*ʻ*i's third traffic fatality of 2024 and remains under investigation.

Also on Kauai, Kaua*ʻ*i Fire Department firefighters extinguished an industrial structure fire at Knudson Gap, Friday, March 8. No injuries were reported. Firefighters were dispatched to a report of the industrial structure fire at Knudson Gap shortly after 3:10 p.m. on Friday. According to a preliminary report, upon arrival shortly before 3:25 p.m., firefighters with the Līhu'e fire station discovered the second floor of the Biomass Power Plant engulfed in flames. The fire was controlled and later extinguished. After firefighters extinguished the fire, KFD Fire Prevention investigators took over the scene and conducted an investigation. Damages to structure and contents are estimated at \$500,000. The cause of the fire has been determined as accidental.

On Oahu Five family members are dead after a murder-suicide at a home in Manoa. Honolulu police say a man stabbed his wife and three children to death on Sunday, then turned the knife on himself, taking his own life. The children were 17, 12 and ten-years-old. Police say this is one of the deadliest crimes of its nature in Oahu's history. The motive is not clear. But, the officers were called to the home by a neighbor after an argument.

About 800 bills are still alive as the 2024 Hawaii legislative session reaches its halfway point. That's a third of the bills that were introduced this year. One of them is the so-called visitor impact fee bill. Supported by Governor Josh Green, it would add a 25-dollar tax on transient accommodations, with the revenue used to help offset tourists' effects on Hawaii's environment and to address climate change. Meanwhile, state lawmakers have not yet restored the Hawaii Tourism Authority's funding that they eliminated during last year's legislative session. On average, about 250 bills introduced in Hawaii become a law annually.

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Local Kauaʻi News – Tuesday March 12, 2024

Construction of a luxury vacation condo on Kauai must stop for ten days. That's after a judge issued an order on Monday, calling for a temporary work stoppage for Kau-anoe O Koloa. The 279-unit project is being built on a cultural site next to the Kiahuna Golf Course in Poipu. Activists say the project is destroying archeological sites, protected specials and burial grounds. The next court hearing on the matter is March 28th.

The Kauai Department of Water (DOW) announces a new, self-service credit and debit card payment kiosk available to customers in the main lobby at their Lihue office. The payment kiosk allows customers to access their current water bill balance and make a payment with most major credit cards and debit cards with the Visa or MasterCard logo. To use the self-service kiosk, customers will need to enter their account number, name and service address, followed by a credit or debit card payment. The transactions are quick and convenient, and a receipt is provided for each successful payment. Customers may still pay with cash or check at the Billing Services window with a DOW customer service representative.

On Maui Lawsuits related to the deadly Maui wildfires will be heard in Maui state court in Wailuku. A federal judge announced the decision on Monday. It comes after Hawaiian Electric and other companies facing legal action tried to move the venue to federal court on Oahu. Attorneys for fire victims and survivors are hailing the ruling as a victory. State Court Judge Peter Cahill says he is ready to issue trial dates for cases related to the Kula fire later this year. The court is expected to begin granting motions to remand dozens of cases to Wailuku to be looked at by Cahill.

On Oahu The trial in the Federal case of the U.S. versus Keith Kaneshiro is set to begin today with jury selection. Retired Federal Public Defender Alexander Sulvers said he expects the jury section to take about two days. According to the indictment, employees at the Honolulu Mitsunaga and Associates firm bribed then-Honolulu prosecutor Kaneshiro with campaign donations in exchange for him prosecuting a former company employee. Four others have also been indicted including former Dennis Mitsunaga and three of his employees.

Also on Oahu Employees who worked for the Manoa chiropractor who killed his wife and three kids in a murder-suicide on Sunday are speaking out. Several of the 46-year-old man's employees say he was a devoted family man, but had fallen into a deep depression. They say he was happy and talkative, but his demeanor completely changed last year. His employees describe him as moody and disengaged and say patients began noticing his change in attitude as well. There is no official motive for what is considered the second-deadliest mass murder in state history. But, the man's employees say he was having financial difficulties. Records also show he was facing heavy debt.

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Local Kauaʻi News – Wednesday March 13, 2024

Kauai Mayor Derek Kawakami invites the public to attend the State of the County Address tomorrow Thursday, March 14. The event will be held at 10 a.m. at the Līhuʻe Civic Center, Courtyard. Mayor Kawakami's 2024 State of the County Address will also be live-streamed online on the county of Kauai facebook page, Hōʻike TV's YouTube page, and live on Hōʻike Kauaʻi Community Television on channels 53 and 54. The State of the County will also be posted on the County's website following the event.

On Kauai A 400-million-dollar project to restore Kauai's Coco Palms Resort is underway. The resort has been closed since it suffered major damage from Hurricane Iniki in 1992. Much of the remnants of the resort are being demolished and removed. The developer in charge of the project, Reef Capital Partners, hopes to complete rebuilding and restoration by 2026. The new version of the resort will be smaller, with 350 rooms instead of 400-plus. Three restaurants and the 15-acre coconut grove are also being restored. The Kauai Planning Commission rejected a petition Tuesday from a group of residents who were asking the commission to revoke permits issued to the owners of the Coco Palms Resort property.

On Maui More than one-thousand Maui wildfire survivors are planning to sue Kamehameha Schools, utility companies and the state. Jan Apo, an attorney representing the survivors, says Hawaiian Electric is to blame for the deadly wildfire in Lahaina last August. Apo says the company re-energized powerlines that had fallen during hurricane-force winds. He also believes he can pinpoint exactly where the fire started. He says Kamehameha Schools owns that land, which included dry trees that shouldn't have been there. He is also planning to sue Hawaiian Telecom, Spectrum Cable, the state and others.

On Oahu The Honolulu Police Department believes two recent acid attacks are connected. Detectives say the suspect who attacked a woman with acid in Mililani last year helped plan an acid attack near Ala Moana Center in January. The more recent attack, which left a teacher critically injured, was allegedly part of a murder-for-hire plot. The Honolulu Police Department says the motive for the second attack was to cast doubt on whether the right suspect was behind bars for the first attack. Both suspects were indicted on additional charges by an Oahu grand jury on Tuesday and are being held without bail.

And also on Oahu Former Honolulu police chief Louis Kealoha wants to get out of prison early. That's according to recent court filings, which show Kealoha filed a petition to reduce his sentence by 16 months, citing a change in federal sentencing guidelines. The government has asked the court to turn down his request, citing his "egregious abuse of power during his time as police chief." Kealoha was convicted of conspiracy and other crimes in 2019. He began serving a seven-year prison sentence in June of 2021.

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Local Kauaʻi News by Wilma Lee Kapp
2024 - Quarter 1 – January – February - March

Local Kauaʻi News – Thursday March 14, 2024

Kauai Mayor Derek Kawakami presented the State of the County Address this morning. For those who were unable to attend the event The State of the County address is now posted on the County's of Kauai's facebook page.

Our Kauai Department of Water (DOW) announces an emergency water service shutdown on a portion of Kuamoʻo Road; from Opaekaʻa Road to Paʻako Street, and adjoining streets in the area. Water service will be turned off from approximately 1 p.m. to 4 p.m to conduct emergency repairs to a recent mainline break. A partial single lane closure will be implemented along Kuamoʻo Road to provide a safe work zone for repairs. Flagger personnel will assist with traffic flow.

On Oahu The Hawaii House of Representatives is approving an 11-billion-dollar budget bill for the 2025 fiscal year. The budget includes a billion dollars for Maui wildfire recovery. It also gives schools millions more for their operational and capital improvement budgets, along with a second chance to finish projects that have lapsed in the past. Affordable housing would get 240-million-dollars in funding. Some public safety departments' budgets would double, while millions more would also be committed to airports, highways and harbors. But, the parks and ecosystem restoration departments would lose funding. The budget now goes to the state Senate for consideration.

Also on Oahu, Police have opened a theft investigation after part of a bank in Kapolei was found damaged this morning. It happened at American Savings Bank on Wakea Street on Oahu. A video shows the roof above the ATM drive through collapsed and debris is scattered in the parking lot. Its not exactly clear what happened but it's believed the suspects took and used an excavator from a nearby construction site and got away with some cash. The amount isn't known and there haven't been any arrests yet.

The Hawaii Department of Transportation is planning a statewide aviation noise study. The general aviation noise study, which would also involve the FAA, could cost up to two-million-dollars. It would include monitoring the noise of tour helicopters, which have sparked numerous complaints from people who say they fly too low and too close to their homes. The study results will influence Hawaii's airport systems planning process. It is expected to take two years to complete.

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Local Kauaʻi News – Friday March 15, 2024

Our Kauai Mayor Derek S.K. Kawakami delivered his sixth State of the County Address at the Līhuʻe Civic Center on Thursday. In his speech, Mayor Kawakami outlined the administration's proposed Fiscal Year 2025 budget, which reflects an Operating Budget of \$344.9 million and a Capital Improvement Budget of \$103.6 million.

Affordable housing remains an important focus in this year's budget. The County aims to build at least 30 supportive housing units in every district of our island. The County is also in various stages on several other proposed development projects in Puhi, Waimea and Kīlauea.

The County also will begin construction to revitalize the Līhuʻe Civic Center's old Big Save space, which will serve as a hub for early childcare, education, and other youth programs.

Mayor Kawakami closed his speech on Thursday with an exciting announcement to the County of Kauaʻi's workforce that this year's budget proposal will offer all county employees a free healthcare option.

On Kauai's north shore The Hawaiʻi Department of Transportation wants you to know about the closure of Kūhiō Highway in Wainiha beginning Monday, March 18, 2024, for the Wainiha Bridge Repair project. Closures will be nightly on a Monday through Thursday schedule from 10 p.m. to 5:30 a.m. the following day. The \$225,000 project will replace the bridge support and panel members of the Wainiha that have corroded over time. The closures will run for the week concluding on Friday morning March 22, 2024. Electronic message boards will be posted with closure information.

The National Transportation Safety Board has released a preliminary report on the helicopter that crashed on a Kauai beach. According to the report, the pilot of the tour helicopter "smelled smoke" and heard a "loud pop," which was followed by a warning tone. The helicopter crashed on a remote beach on Kauai last month. Aside from the pilot, there were four passengers on board. One person injured their back. The pilot of the "Jack Harter Helicopters" tour had to auto-rotate the chopper blades to land, and inspectors found a broken main rotor drive shaft, according to the report. An investigation into the crash is ongoing.

Also on Kauai A Lāwaʻi man was arrested on Mar. 14 in connection with a two-vehicle crash that occurred on Jan. 19, 2024. At approximately 9:30 p.m. on Jan. 19, police responded to the scene of a two-vehicle crash that occurred on Poʻipū Road. The incident resulted in the death of a 69-year-old male resident of Kalāheo and serious injuries to a 25-year-old female resident of Kalāheo. Keola DeCosta, a 42-year-old resident of Lāwaʻi, was arrested by officers and released pending investigation. DeCosta was arrested on Mar. 14, at approximately 11 a.m., for the following offenses: Manslaughter, Negligent Homicide in the First Degree, Negligent Injury in the First Degree, Inattention to Driving, Operating a Motor Vehicle Under the Influence of an Intoxicant and another 6 charges. DeCosta's bail is set at \$250,000 and he is currently being held at the Kauaʻi Police Department Cell Block.

The fire alarm systems at 15 of Hawaii's schools are out of commission. The Department of Education says most of the systems will take three to ten months to replace. The DOE recently took inventory of the fire alarms at all 258 of the state's regular public schools and six public charter

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schools. Ten other schools still have working fire alarms, but their systems will soon be in need of replacing. New fire alarm systems are estimated to cost two-million dollars per school.

People who still own a cesspool could be charged a new monthly fee starting next year. That's if a bill still alive in the state legislature becomes a law. The monthly rate would be equivalent to sewage rates. About 83-thousand properties in Hawaii have cesspools, which have been linked with pollution and coral deaths after contaminated groundwater seeps into the ocean.

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Local Kauaīi News – Monday March 18, 2024

The Hawaiīi Department of Transportation wants you to know about a full nightly closure of Kūhiō Highway in Wainiha beginning tonight Monday, March 18, 2024, for the Wainiha Bridge Repair project. Closures will be nightly on a Monday through Thursday schedule from 10 p.m. to 5:30 a.m. the following day. The \$225,000 project will replace the bridge support and panel members of the Wainiha that have corroded over time. The closures will run for the week concluding on Friday morning March 22, 2024.

Here on Kauai There are only two weeks left to sign up for the 2024 K-PAL flag football season! Open to all youth ages 5 to 18, practices begin May 1st. No registration fee is required and every participant will receive a free K_PAL football uniform shirt. KPAL also need volunteer coach. All games will be played at Vidinha Stadium auxiliary field. Games will happen Saturdays in June and July. To register go to Kauaipal.org or call 808-241-1647. If you have any information regarding sports on our island that you would like to share our island please email Kauaisports@Kongradio.com

State lawmakers are discussing a bill that would aim to tackle issues involving lithium-ion batteries in Hawaii. The House bill would establish a working group to examine how the batteries can best be recycled and reused. The batteries are becoming more common as Hawaii strives toward its clean energy goals. They are used in electric vehicles, solar panels and other renewable energy devices. The working group would exist within the Hawaii State Energy Office and make policy recommendations about recycling EV batteries.

Hawaii is ordering a licensed money transmitter to stop doing business in the state. On Friday, Sigue Corporation received a cease-and-desist order from the state Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs Division of Financial Institutions. Sigue, which had been transmitting money in Hawaii for the past 15 years, was initially requested to surrender its license. The DFI says the company did not meet statutory provisions related to financial conditions. Last year, Sigue Corporation conducted about 16-thousand money transmission transactions on the islands, for a total of more than nine-million-dollars.

On Oahu A man is facing a slew of charges after allegedly carjacking a woman and then causing a six-car crash in Waikiki. Police arrested the 32-year-old suspect on Sunday night as he tried to take control of another persons' car. Video shows officers pulling the man out of that car. He was fleeing the scene of the six-car pile-up on Kapiolani Boulevard. Police say three people were taken to the hospital after the crash. The suspect was hit with several charges, including robbery and auto theft.

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Local Kaua*ʻ*i News – Tuesday March 19, 2024

The Hawaii Department of Taxation is warning everyone to be aware of scams this tax season. The Hawaii Department of Taxation said taxpayers have been receiving letters telling them to call a number about an overdue debt or their property will be seized. The Hawaii Department of Taxation said the letters are NOT official letters from them and they're a scam. Taxpayers shouldn't respond to any letters from the "Tax Processing Group" or "Internal Processing Service." The criminals sending these letters are scammers attempting to obtain your personal information. If you have questions, you should call the number that's on an official tax agency website such as tax.hawaii.gov/contact.

On Maui The results of an independent investigation into the Lahaina wildfire are being delayed for another month. The state Attorney General's Office report is now expected to come out on April 17th. Officials with the Attorney General's Office blame challenges with getting information and access to Maui County officials and employees. Investigators are putting together a timeline of events related to the fire last August 8th and analyzing how government agencies responded. With the report, the attorney general is trying to determine if more could have been done to save lives and property as hurricane-force winds and flames raged across the town.

Governor Josh Green is in Japan this week. Green is meeting with Japanese officials and business leaders about tourism. They are discussing ways to make it easier to travel between Japan and Hawaii. Japan is Hawaii's top international visitor market, but tourism from Japan has largely declined since the pandemic. Japanese tourists' arrival and spending numbers are up this year compared to last year, but are still significantly down from 2019. Green is advocating for a so-called "Travel Corridor" that would expand global entry, improve biometric screening, and pursue preclearance status for travelers.

On Oahu The two men behind bars in connection with two acid attacks on women on Oahu within the past year are pleading not guilty. The men, who are facing multiple charges, appeared in court on Monday. The first suspect is accused of attacking a woman with a liquid chemical outside of a 24 Hour Fitness in Mililani last year. The second suspect is accused of similarly attacking a woman outside of a fitness center near Ala Moana Center in January. Prosecutors say the second attack was part of a murder-for-hire plot. The first suspect allegedly commissioned the second suspect to randomly attack a woman, to cast doubt on who was actually responsible for the first attack.

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Local Kauaʻi News – Wednesday March 20, 2024

Kauai Police arrested Jason Mearns, a 49-year-old man in connection with an incident that involved animal cruelty and assault. On Mar. 17, at approximately 12 p.m., officers responded to a residence in Kōloa after it was reported that a dog had been strangled to death. According to a preliminary police report, a 35-year-old male resident of Kōloa was inside his residence when he heard a loud noise coming from where his dog was kept outside. Outside the man found Mearns lifting his dog off the ground by its chain. AN argument ensued which resulted in the 35-year-old man sustaining an abrasion to his left forearm and multiple scrapes and bruises. The dog, a 3-year-old terrier mix, was already dead when officers arrived. Mearns was arrested for the offense of Cruelty to Animals in the First Degree and Assault in the Third Degree. Mearns’s bail is set at \$20,000

The Kauaʻi Police Department is asking for the public’s help in locating a missing adult male. William Birkholz, age 76, of Līhuʻe, was reported missing on Monday, Mar. 18, 2024. Birkholz was last seen near Nāwiliwili Small Boat Harbor on Saturday, Mar. 16, 2024. Birkholz is 5 feet 7 inches tall, weighs approximately 140 pounds and has blue eyes and grey hair. He is known to frequent the beach area known as Kitchens and Lydgate Beach Park. Anyone with information about Birkholz’s whereabouts on Kauaʻi is urged to call KPD Dispatch at 241-1711. Those wishing to remain anonymous can provide information by submitting a tip to crime stoppers Kauai at [cskauai.org](https://www.cskauai.org) . Tipsters to crime stoppers may be eligible for a monetary reward.

The Department of Water (DOW) announces an emergency water service shutdown scheduled for portions of Nawiliwili Road and Lala Road to relocate a valve on the main line, tomorrow, March 21, 2024 between 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., weather permitting. The following portions of Nawiliwili Road and Lala Road are affected: Nawiliwili Road from Nokekula Circle to Lala Road; Lala Road from Nawiliwili Road to Kauai High School. Customers have been notified via door-to-door notices.

A plan to redevelop an eastside community in Kapaʻa into affordable rentals has been unanimously approved by the county council on Tuesday. Kapaʻa Homes currently consists of 36 homes but will be transformed to offer 124 homes for Kauai families. One to four-bedroom rental units will be available for residents earning between 30% and 60% of the area median income. The project, headed by the Hawaii Public Housing Authority in partnership with Highridge Costa, will also include on-site amenities, such as a community room, playground, BBQ areas, and a central laundry facility. Construction is set to begin in late 2025 and is expected to be completed in early 2027. For more information, visit [kapaa-homes.com](https://www.kapaa-homes.com)

Hawaii is closer than ever to legalizing the recreational use of marijuana for adults. On Tuesday, a legalization bill was passed by the House Committee for Commerce and Consumer Protection, following hours of testimony. The committee passed the bill with some amendments. One would let cannabis sellers form labor unions. The bill was already passed by the state Senate. Next, it heads to the House Finance Committee, then would go to the full House for a vote. Finally, it would be negotiated with the Senate.

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Local Kaua*ʻ*i News – Thursday March 21, 2024

Spring break season is in full swing, but Hawaii's hotels are not fully occupied. Occupancy levels in recent days have been at 70 to 80-percent. But, that's still below the 90-percent occupancy rates that were common during spring breaks before the pandemic. About 927-thousand people visited Hawaii in March of 2019. Last March, there were 882-thousand visitors.

On Oahu Two police officers are under investigation for manslaughter after a 77-year-old man died. The Honolulu Police Department's Chief Joe Logan announced the investigation on Wednesday, saying two officers used "physical force" to arrest a man in December who they believed was driving a stolen moped. Logan says the man sustained injuries to his face and torso and was taken to the hospital, but he refused treatment. He was arrested and released pending investigation. Honolulu Police chief Logan says two days after the arrest, the man was taken to the hospital again and it was discovered that he had multiple rib and facial fractures. He left the hospital several hours later and was found dead at his home on January 10th. The two officers have been placed on restricted duty.

Also on Oahu The bribery trial of former Honolulu city prosecutor Keith Kaneshiro is underway, with opening statements delivered on Wednesday. Several co-defendants are also on trial, with the main one being powerful construction executive Dennis Mitsunaga. Kaneshiro is accused of taking dirty campaign money from Mitsunaga, in exchange for prosecuting a former employee of his company. The federal case is being heard on Oahu by Judge Timothy Burgess, a former chief judge of the U.S. District Court in Alaska. The former judge handling the case, Michael Seabright, recused himself from the trial because of an alleged plot targeting his life.

A lawmaker who for years fought to stop the legalization of same-sex marriage in Hawaii is issuing a public apology. State Senator Mike Gabbard says his views on the topic have since evolved. In 1998, he was one of the leaders who passed a constitutional amendment to protect traditional marriage. The 76-year-old apologized on Tuesday, during a hearing for a House bill to repeal that amendment, which gave the legislature the authority to limit marriage.

A new USA Today list ranks the Honolulu Zoo the fourth best zoo in the nation. The ranking is based on reader voting from earlier this month. It means that, in less than four years, the zoo went from being unaccredited to being considered one of the top zoos in the nation. The zoo earned its accreditation back in 2020 after losing it in 2016.

A bill to legalize the recreational use of marijuana for adults in Hawaii is moving forward. Senate Bill 3335 was approved by the House Consumer Protection and Commerce Committee earlier this week in a seven-to-three vote. Before the measure was passed forward, the committee added an amendment that requires cannabis businesses to have labor peace agreements with bona fide labor unions. If the bill is passed it would allow for the recreational use of cannabis and a regulated market for sales.

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Local Kauaʻi News – Friday March 22, 2024

Here on Kauai, Kauai officials say an inmate Matthew J. Ornellas Jr., 33 who escaped from the Kauai Community Correctional Center early this morning was injured in an alleged hit-and-run on Kuhio Highway. Ornellas escaped from KCCC just after 1 a.m. today but was hit shortly before 1:10 a.m. by what appeared to be a dark-colored vehicle heading toward Lihue on the highway. The driver failed to stop to render aid and was last seen making a U-turn toward Kapaa. Correctional officers found Ornellas on the highway, about 100 yards northeast of KCCC, with serious injuries. Ornellas was taken by ambulance to the Wilcox Medical Center where he remains in serious condition. Ornellas is serving time for promoting a dangerous drug in the third-degree. Kūhiō Highway was closed in both directions for approximately one hour while KPD's Traffic Safety Section conducted an on-scene investigation. Kauaʻi police are searching for the driver of the vehicle that struck Ornellas and are asking for information from drivers who were traveling on Kūhiō Highway in the vicinity of KCCC on Friday, Mar. 22, between 12 a.m. and 1 a.m. Anyone who may have witnessed the incident is urged to call Officer Henshaw at 808-241-1616. Those wishing to remain anonymous can provide information by submitting a tip at to Crime Stoppers Kauai at [cskauai.org](https://www.cskauai.org) Tipsters may be eligible for a monetary reward.

Our Kauaʻi Fire Department firefighters extinguished a warehouse fire in Kapaʻa on Apopo Road on Thursday, March 21. Firefighters were dispatched to a report of a structure fire on Apopo Road at Kapaʻa shortly after 8:45 p.m. on Thursday. According to a preliminary report, upon arrival firefighters discovered a 20-foot-by-50-foot metal building and its contents on fire. Crews controlled the fire at approximately 9:40 p.m. and fully extinguished the blaze. No injuries were reported. The cause of the fire remains under investigation. Damages to structure and contents are estimated at \$350,000.

State lawmakers are considering two bills that would make housing in single-family neighborhoods a lot denser. A House bill, and a similar Senate bill, call more housing on smaller lots. If passed, county zoning rules for minimum lot sizes would be overridden, allowing multiple homes to be built on lots as small as two-thousand-square-feet. Currently, the common minimum lot sizes are 35-hundred to ten-thousand-square-feet, and that's usually for just one house. Proponents say it would be a way to generate more needed affordable housing.

Some people living downwind of the Lahaina burn zone are reporting respiratory issues. The American Lung Association says, last week, it received four calls from people concerned about dust and air quality. Three of them reported symptoms like a chronic cough. Three months ago, the Hawaii Department of Health urged West Maui residents to avoid all direct exposure to fire debris. The DOH says high levels of toxic substances were found in ash samples collected from more than 100 properties in Lahaina. The substances include arsenic, lead, antimony, cobalt and copper.

State lawmakers are considering approving a special fund that would protect Hawaiian Electric and other utility companies from lawsuits related to the Maui wildfires. HECO is facing potentially billions of dollars in damages following the fires. A measure proposed by HECO and now being debated by lawmakers also calls for a billion-dollar fund to pay for damages from a future fire catastrophe. The

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state wildfire fund would hold enough money to immediately pay for property damages after another fire. To qualify, the fire would have to damage 500 or more buildings.

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Local Kauaʻi News – Monday March 25, 2024

In observance of the Prince Kūhiō Day and Good Friday holidays, County of Kauaʻi offices will be closed on tomorrow March 26th. Closures also include all neighborhood centers; all refuse transfer stations; the Kekaha Landfill; the Puhi Metals Recycling Center; Reynold’s Recycling, the Līhuʻe HI5 Redemption Center; and the Waimea and Kapaʻa swimming pools. Kauaʻi Community Recycling Services (KCRS) in Kīlauea and Kapaʻa will remain open. The schedule for residential refuse pick-up will remain unchanged. The Kauaʻi Bus will be operating on its current daily schedule. Regular business hours for county offices and services will resume on March 27

Here on Kauai Veteran registration for the Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act is slated to take place on this Wed. and Thurs. March 27 and 28. The two-day event will bring out Veteran Affairs health care professionals to share information and resources with veterans on Kauaʻi regarding the new act, which expands VA health care and benefits for veterans exposed to burn pits, Agent Orange and other toxic substances. The event will be from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. at the Kauai Veterans Center at 3215 Kauaʻi Veterans Memorial Highway, Līhuʻe. Veterans who are already enrolled may also come for vaccines, diabetic foot checks, blood pressure checks, as well as health and benefits questions.

Maui County's attorneys are asking for subpoenas that would allow them to work with investigators hired by the state. The investigators are assessing the government's response to the Lahaina wildfire. A week ago, the state Department of the Attorney General announced that the findings of the first phase of the investigation would be delayed until April 17th. Maui County's attorneys say the investigators have failed to follow realistic and respectful practices for gathering information. The state Attorney General's Office has served Maui County with 64 subpoenas since November, saying they are needed to help move the investigation along by securing documents and interviews with officials like police, firefighters, Maui Emergency Management Agency staff and others.

People are being warned to refrain from leaving offerings at Kilauea's summit that could harm the environment. Hawaii Volcanoes National Park officials posted the warning on social media over the weekend. They shared photos of rotting food in roasting pans, plastic-wrapped flowers, and other non-traditional items left at the sacred summit area. People leave these offerings to pay respect to Pelehonuamea, the elemental deity of volcanism and creation, but park officials say they can attract or introduce non-native invasive species to the park.

The Hawaiʻi Department of Transportation reminds travelers to give themselves extra time at airports statewide during the upcoming Easter weekend and the 61st annual Merrie Monarch Festival in Hilo, which starts Easter Sunday, March 31, and culminates on Saturday, April 6. The week-long cultural festival is expected to draw thousands of participants and enthusiasts to Hawaiʻi Island, which could mean increased crowds and limited parking at Hawaiʻi's five busiest airports. The Hilo International Airport in particular is expected to be busy throughout the festival week, and travelers flying into and out of Hilo should plan accordingly. HDOT offers the following tips for air travelers during this period, whether heading to Hilo or other destinations:

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Plan to arrive at the airport at least two hours prior to your scheduled flight departure to allow sufficient time to park, check in and get through security.

Check with your airline on the status of your flight, including any delays, gate assignments and baggage claim area if you are picking up arriving passengers.

Consider catching a ride to the airport, as parking stalls fill up quickly during holidays and special events.

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Local Kauaʻi News – Tuesday March 26, 2024

On Kauai, First responders rescued a 60-year-old female Wisconsin visitor in Kōkeʻe on Monday. Our Kauai Fire Department received a report of an injured hiker near the Waipoʻo Falls Trail in Kōkeʻe at approximately 11:55 a.m. on Monday. When first responders arrived on the scene, they discovered the hiker who sustained an apparent ankle injury while hiking on the trail. After assessing the patient, she was transported to Kauaʻi Veterans Memorial Hospital.

On Oahu The city of Honolulu will pay 12-point-five-million dollars to the driver of a car that was allegedly run off the road by police in Makaha. The rollover crash, which happened during a pursuit in 2021, left all six people inside the car seriously injured. The driver, a 38-year-old man, suffered a traumatic brain injury. His attorney says his client will never work again. Three officers are accused of breaking Honolulu Police Department protocol by chasing the car without their lights and sirens on. They're also accused of leaving the scene after the crash, then coming back and acting like they didn't know what happened.

Also on Oahu A model is facing charges after allegedly trying to bribe a federal agent to convince a judge to let her boyfriend out of a detention center in Honolulu. Shannon Schwartz is being charged with one count of bribery of a public official and one count of obstruction of justice. She allegedly offered five-thousand dollars to the Homeland Security Investigations special agent. She was arrested and released into the custody of a guardian on a 25-thousand dollar unsecured bond.

Also on Oahu The EPA has completed its latest inspection of the Navy's Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility. The EPA says Joint Task Force Red Hill is ready to let the Navy take over the process of shutting the facility down. The regulatory inspection conducted earlier this month shows the task force has met the eleven criteria needed to be met for the transfer to take place. More than 104-million gallons of fuel were removed from the underground tanks in recent months. The Navy is responsible for removing a remaining 32-thousand gallons of residual fuel and sludge still in the pipelines and storage tanks. Joint Task Force Red Hill is scheduled to make the handoff to the Navy on Thursday.

On the Big Island Hawaiian Electric is urging Big Island residents and business owners to conserve power ahead of the Merrie Monarch Festival. HECO is asking all of its customers on the Big Island to scale back their electricity usage through at least next month. Several of the large generators that power the island are having mechanical issues. They are either at a reduced output or are undergoing maintenance. And, the largest generator, which supplies a third of the Big Island's power, is completely offline and is not expected to be back up and running until at least mid-April.

The University of Hawaii is moving toward an "indigenous-centered" institution model. The university has shared its strategic plan on its website, with the first of four "imperatives" saying the goal is to "fulfill their responsibility to Native Hawaiians and Hawaii'i" by "modeling what it means to be an indigenous-serving and indigenous-centered institution" through embracing traditional Hawaiian values and knowledge.

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Local Kauaʻi News – Wednesday March 27, 2024

The Hawaiʻi Department of Transportation wants you to know that the Wainiha Bridge Repair project has been completed as of Friday morning, March 22, 2024. The work to replace the bridge support and panels required closures of Kūhiō Highway in the Wainiha area. All work has been completed and there are no additional full closures needed.

Today, Governor Josh Green is expected to announce a plan to house displaced Lahaina wildfire survivors. Green has threatened to ban short-term vacation rentals, if not enough rental property owners in West Maui allow their units to be used by fire survivors by Monday, April 1st. It would be the first ever ban of its kind in Hawaii. Green has also threatened owners with higher taxes, previously saying 175 more vacation rental units need to be converted to housing by Monday. For incentive, the governor is promising owners who cooperate with his request that their county property taxes will be waived, and they will be assured of steady, government-backed rent. Green is trying to expand housing options in West Maui, saying fire survivors want to stay close to their jobs and schools.

Residents leaving Hawaii are costing the state millions of dollars in lost tax revenue. Seth Colby, a research and planning officer at the Department of Taxation, says out-migration since 2020 has cost Hawaii over 180-million dollars in general excise taxes and state income taxes. Between 2020 and 2021, the state lost nearly 10-thousand people, according to the Hawaii Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism. The trend increased during the height of the pandemic, and more than 11-thousand people left Hawaii from 2022 to 2023.

Hawaii will not be charging its visitors a climate impact fee. The state Senate has killed two measures that would have brought forward the fee, which was championed by Governor Josh Green. This is the third straight year the climate impact fee has failed. This time it was passed by the House, but died in the Senate after crossing over earlier this month. Lawmakers did not get a hearing scheduled by last week's deadline. Governor Green, who called the fee a top priority, says the revenue would have been used to better manage and protect Hawaii's environment from the effects of climate change and other issues.

On the Big Island A woman claims a house was built on her property and sold without her approval. Annaleine Reynolds says that Keaau Development Partnership hired a construction company to build houses on properties in a Big Island subdivision. The construction company then built one on a lot the developer didn't own, that belonged to Reynolds. She now reportedly faces higher property taxes and is unable to use the land for its intended purpose. Keaau Development Projects later sued the construction company and Reynolds, with representatives saying they hope a judge can resolve the mistake.

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Local Kauaʻi News – Thursday March 28, 2024

Kauaʻi Community Correctional Center Inmate Matthew J. Ornellas has died from injuries he sustained in an alleged hit-and-run upon his escape Friday from the Kauaʻi Community Correctional Center Friday, March 22, 2024. Ornellas, 33, escaped KCCC by scaling the facility's outer perimeter fence just after 1 a.m. Friday, March 22, 2024. Correctional officers pursued Ornellas on foot but lost sight of him after he entered a dense brush area. Shortly afterward, correctional officers heard a loud sound from the roadway. Officers then observed a dark-colored vehicle making a U-turn on the Kūhiō Highway, accelerating toward Kapaʻa. Correctional officers searched for Ornellas along Kūhiō Highway and found him lying next to the roadside ditch with serious injuries. Ornellas, a minimum custody inmate, was serving time for promoting a dangerous drug in the third-degree, a class C felony.

Here on Kauai Veteran registration for the Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act is taking place Today, Thurs. March 28. The event is bringing out Veteran Affairs health care professionals to share information and resources with veterans on Kauaʻi regarding the new act, which expands VA health care and benefits for veterans exposed to burn pits, Agent Orange and other toxic substances. The event is until 6 p.m. at the Kauai Veterans Center at 3215 Kauaʻi Veterans Memorial Highway, Līhuʻe. Veterans who are already enrolled may also come for vaccines, diabetic foot checks, blood pressure checks, as well as health and benefits questions.

Our Kauai Police Department is implementing a new resource which gives the community the opportunity to assist law enforcement. City Protect is a program that allows residents and businesses to register their security camera locations and allow law enforcement to know who to contact if a crime occurs in the area. The Kauai Police department said registration does not obligate the resident to provide footage to the police and police will not have direct access to the camera or the system. If police are in need of footage, they will contact the registered residents to make a request, saving time that would have been spent going door to door asking about external cameras. Registration can be withdrawn at any time. For further information or assistance with camera registration, please contact the Kauaʻi Police Department at (808) 241-8104.

The Hawaiʻi Department of Transportation reminds travelers to give themselves extra time at airports statewide this Easter weekend and the 61st annual Merrie Monarch Festival in Hilo, which starts Easter Sunday, March 31, and culminates on Saturday, April 6. The week-long cultural festival is expected to draw thousands of participants and enthusiasts to Hawaiʻi Island, which could mean increased crowds and limited parking at Hawaiʻi's five busiest airports. The Hilo International Airport in particular is expected to be busy throughout the festival week, and travelers flying into and out of Hilo should plan accordingly. The department of transportation advises travelers to"

Plan to arrive at the airport at least two hours prior to your scheduled flight departure to allow sufficient time to park, check in and get through security.

Check with your airline on the status of your flight, including any delays, gate assignments and baggage claim area if you are picking up arriving passengers.

Catch a ride to the airport, as parking stalls fill up quickly during holidays and special events. On Maui there will not be a moratorium on short-term vacation rentals. Governor Josh Green, who

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threatened to temporarily ban vacation rentals in West Maui, says the state has reached the minimum number of units it needs to house families impacted by last summer's wildfires. Green says more than three-thousand displaced residents are still in hotels, but that number is down from eight-thousand last August. Green says families still living in hotels are slowly being transitioned into more permanent housing. The governor still says some of Maui's 31-thousand short-term rental properties could and should be used as housing.

Governor Josh Green believes the outlook for Hawaii's upcoming budget is better than initially thought. Green says Maui wildfire response and recovery efforts are not expected to overwhelm the state's finances. During a presentation on Wednesday, Green said actual fire costs, for the fiscal year ending June 30th, are projected to be 220-million-dollars less than a recent worst-case scenario projection by his administration. Green is also cancelling a scheduled 300-million-dollar deposit into the state and county employee retirement benefits fund. The reserved cash in the state's general fund will instead go to other budget needs.

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