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Local Kauaʻi News
2022 - Quarter 1 – January**

Local Kauaʻi News – Monday January 3, 2022

Sadly our Kauaʻi District Health Office reported a fatality and announced 104 new cases of COVID-19 today, Monday, Jan. 3. The fatality was a female resident in her 70s who was hospitalized. Our condolences go out to her ohana. There are a total of 18 Kauaʻi COVID fatalities to date. Today's cases bring the number of active cases to 706, with seven hospitalized, and 4,436 cumulative cases.

Hawaii Department of Health officials reported 3,044 new confirmed and probable coronavirus infections today, bringing the state's total since the start of the pandemic to 121,864 cases. No new virus-related fatalities were reported today so the statewide COVID-19 death toll remains 1,094. In a tweet today, Lt. Gov. Josh Green said there were 192 COVID-19 patients hospitalized statewide with 62 of those patients having been vaccinated.

There are no plans to delay the return of in-person public school in Hawaii. The Department of Education says all campuses will be open for the first school day after winter break tomorrow, despite the current coronavirus case surge. But, the teachers' union doesn't think it's the right move. The Hawaii State Teachers Association argues the DOE hasn't yet made the necessary moves to prevent coronavirus outbreaks when keiki and teachers head back to classrooms.

The mayor of Honolulu is offering no comment on the Navy water contamination crisis. Fuel leaking from the Navy's Red Hill tanks impacted the water supply of nearly 100-thousand Oahu residents last month. During a recent press conference, the mayor praised the Honolulu Board of Water Supply for their work. However, he declined to comment on the crisis itself or echo the board's call to drain the Red Hill tanks. His lack of engagement has left some members of the community confused and disappointed.

Wages for Hawaii residents are failing to keep up with inflation. While economists expect prices for things like food and gas to level off over time, high inflation is going to stick around for awhile. The University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization predicts that rising prices and housing costs will make things extra difficult for residents of a state that already had a high cost of living pre-pandemic.

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Local Kaua'i News
2022 - Quarter 1 – January**

Local Kaua'i News – Tuesday January 4, 2022

Kaua'i District Health Office announced 117 new cases of COVID-19 today, Tuesday, Jan. 4. Today's cases bring the number of people hospitalized on our island to seven, and 4,553 cumulative cases. There have been a total of 18 Kaua'i COVID fatalities to date.

Our state of Hawaii Department of Health officials reported 1,592 new confirmed and probable coronavirus infections today, bringing the state's total since the start of the pandemic to 123,456 cases. In a tweet this morning, Lt. Gov. Josh Green put the number of COVID-19 patients hospitalized statewide at 176, with 72 of them having been vaccinated.

One in five COVID tests are coming back positive on Oahu. According to new data from the state Health Department, the island's positivity rate has skyrocketed to 20-percent, while the counties of Maui and Hawaii are seeing positivity rates of 15-percent on average. Kauai's rate is sitting around 11-percent. This data doesn't factor in at-home tests, or people who are simply not getting tested. The Hawaii Department of Health isn't budging on its decision to shut down the Navy's Red Hill fuel storage facility. Yesterday, the DOH issued a "final decision," affirming the order. The Navy does not agree it should have to empty the World War Two-era fuel tanks, even though a leak in late November ended up putting jet fuel in its water supply and sickening hundreds of Oahu residents, both on and off military bases. The Navy has the chance to appeal the final decision.

Fans are once again banned from the stands at sporting events hosted by the Oahu Interscholastic Association. OIA officials cite the rise of coronavirus cases and the Omicron variant. That means the seats will be empty when the spring high school basketball season starts on Thursday. Masks will also be required for all student-athletes and coaches actively participating in games, except for students playing water sports and wrestling.

A new study suggests Hawaii's high housing costs may be posing a health hazard. The Hawaii Budget and Policy Center says the lack of affordable housing options is harming mental and physical health statewide. The lead researcher, Beth Giesting, says having secure housing would reduce most residents' healthcare costs. The study also finds residents who have trouble paying for housing or are homeless have a much higher chance of winding up with a chronic disease, like heart disease or diabetes. The median home price on the islands is now more than double the national average.

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Local Kaua'i News – Wednesday January 5, 2022

Sandon Igne was arrested Tuesday on an arrest warrant that was issued Monday that was based on a Grand Jury indictment. Igne was the operator of the truck that was involved in the fatal crash that occurred on Kaunalihi Highway on December 24, 2020. The 32-year-old Lāwa'i man was charged twice with Manslaughter, twice with Negligent Injury in the Second Degree, twice with Negligent Homicide in the First Degree, Negligent Injury in the First Degree, Operating a Vehicle Under the Influence of an Intoxicant, Inattention of Driving, Reckless Driving, Promoting a Harmful Drug in the Fourth Degree, and Prohibited Acts related to drug paraphernalia.

Our Kaua'i District Health Office announced 175 new cases of COVID-19 today, Wednesday, Jan. 5. Today's cases bring the number of cases hospitalized to seven and 4,728 cumulative cases.. There have been a total of 18 Kaua'i COVID fatalities to date.

Hawaii Department of Health officials reported 2,611 new confirmed and probable coronavirus infections today, bringing the state's total since the start of the pandemic to 126,067 cases. No new virus-related fatalities were reported today so the statewide COVID-19 death toll remains 1,094.

Menehune Road remains closed near the Waimea Swinging Bridge until further notice due to a landslide that occurred Tuesday morning. Public Works Roads crews were on site Tuesday to attempt to clear the roadway of debris, but work ceased when additional materials became loose. Rockfall mitigation contractors are expected on site today to begin slope stabilization work. There is no timeline yet on when the road will be reopened. Updates will be provided as information becomes available.

Kauai police are investigating after a man's body was found inside an overturned vehicle in the Hanamaulu River . The body was discovered near the entrance to Hanamaulu Beach Park at about 5:30 Sunday night. It's unclear if the vehicle had crashed, and police haven't said how long they think it was there.

On Oahu Mayor Rick Blangiardi is announcing a temporary capacity limit at large outdoor events. A temporary limit of 50-percent capacity was revealed during a press conference Wednesday. Honolulu's Mayor said he needed the public to respond with 'good decision-making' and encouraged islanders to get vaccinated.

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Local Kaua'i News
2022 - Quarter 1 – January**

Local Kaua'i News – Thursday January 6, 2022

Kaua'i District Health Office announced 240 new cases of COVID-19 today, Thursday, Jan. 6. Today's cases bring the number of active cases to 802, with seven hospitalized, and 4,968 cumulative cases. There have been a total of 18 Kaua'i COVID fatalities to date.

The State of Hawaii Department of Health officials today reported four new coronavirus-related deaths and 4,789 new confirmed and probable infections statewide, bringing the state's totals since the start of the pandemic to 1,098 fatalities and 130,856 cases. The total number of new confirmed and probable cases today marks a new record high.

As surging COVID cases complicate school staffing, the Hawaii Department of Education Interim Superintendent is reassuring the public the district is committed to in-person learning. Keith Hayashi said while parents have the option of remote learning, those programs are limited. He's encouraging students to get vaccinated and boosted, to wear a mask and to practice other preventative strategies including handwashing. This comes after more than one-thousand teachers were out yesterday due to COVID.

Military families impacted by the Navy's water contamination crisis will most likely no longer be heading back to their homes this month. The Navy now says residents of Aliamanu Military Reservation won't be able to come home until mid-February. That's more than a month after the originally scheduled return date. Crews recently flushed millions of gallons of jet fuel-contaminated water in the area, both from the Navy's feeder pipes and inside homes. But, test results show the water quality still doesn't meet both state health department and EPA standards. The system will now have to be flushed and tested all over again.

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Local Kauaī News
2022 - Quarter 1 – January

Local Kauaī News – Friday January 7, 2022

The State of Hawaii Department of Health officials today reported three new coronavirus-related deaths and 3,586 new confirmed and probable infections statewide, bringing the state's totals since the start of the pandemic to 1,101 fatalities and 134,442 cases.

Monsanto is pleading guilty to two felonies and 30 misdemeanors for spraying a banned pesticide in Hawaii. After yesterday's plea in federal court, the company must pay a 12-million-dollar fine for committing environmental crimes. The company agreed to plead guilty to using an illegal pesticide on cornfields, and illegally storing that pesticide in the state. Workers were allowed to go into the affected cornfields shortly after the chemical was sprayed, even though federal law bans people from entering areas that were sprayed within six days of application.

Maui County will wait a little longer before it changes the definition of "fully vaccinated" to include a booster shot. The new rule was going to take effect tomorrow, but now it begins January 24th. Those attending indoor restaurants, bars, and gyms will have to show proof they've received a booster shot, or provide a recent negative coronavirus test. If not, they can't be allowed inside those businesses. Mayor Mike Victorino says the change should allow teens time to get boosted.

The majority of people currently hospitalized with coronavirus in Hawaii haven't taken a booster shot. Of the 215 people hospitalized as of yesterday, 101 are vaccinated against the virus. Among those who are vaccinated, very few have taken the booster. And, most patients are at least 50-years-old. During the Delta variant-driven surge last summer, most hospital patients were 35 to 50-year-olds. The Omicron surge is also seeing fewer people in intensive care or on ventilators.

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Local Kaua'i News – Monday January 10, 2022

Today's cases bring the number of active cases to 1,082 with 11 hospitalized, and 5,776 cumulative cases. There are a total of 19 Kaua'i COVID fatalities to date.

The State of Hawaii Department of Health officials reported 3,875 new confirmed and probable coronavirus infections today, bringing the state's total since the start of the pandemic to 147,099 cases. No new virus-related fatalities were reported today so the statewide COVID-19 death toll remains 1,105.

for the first time since the pandemic began 22 months ago A cruise ship with passengers is scheduled to be docked on Kauai at Nawiliwili today . The Grand Princess sailed in from Los Angeles and arrived on Oahu Sunday morning. It's operating at two-thirds capacity, but still brought more than two-thousand people from out of state. The CDC has already placed the ship under yellow status, which means several passengers or multiple crew members might be infected with COVID-19. Over the next two months, six different cruise ships -- with a capacity to hold more than 26,000 passengers -- will dock in Honolulu Harbor. They include the 949-passenger Ruby Princess which docked in San Francisco last week with a dozen passengers infected with COVID-19.

Firefighters responded to a man in distress Saturday afternoon along the Kalepa Ridge trail in Līhu'e. The 59-year-old male resident who was having difficulty breathing along the Kalepa Ridge trail. Bystanders at the scene reported that the man became unresponsive, and they began administering CPR. Rescue 3 personnel aboard Air 1 were dispatched to the scene where they found the man, who had regained consciousness, lying on the ground. Rescuers airlifted the man to a nearby landing zone at Kaua'i Beach Resort. The man was transported to Wilcox Medical Center in serious condition for further treatment.

Maui County is banning the construction of all new hotels and visitor lodging for the next two years. Mayor Mike Victorino vetoed the county council's decision in July, but on Friday night, the council decided to override the veto. The council says it will use the two years to develop a plan to combat over-tourism, diversify the economy, and build more affordable, permanent housing in the wake of places for visitors to temporarily stay. Mayor Victorino also believes over-tourism is an issue, but thinks banning new hotels isn't the right solution. Some opponents of the idea are also worried vacation rentals will take the place of new hotels.

The state Department of Education is struggling to find substitute teachers amid ongoing staffing shortages. More than 18-hundred educators called in sick last Friday, which amounts to around 14 percent of the statewide workforce. The DOE reported over 440 unfilled substitute teacher positions. The agency said that the unfilled positions were being covered by other school staff. However, one recently approved substitute teacher said applying for the DOE was a lengthy process.

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Local Kauaʻi News – Tuesday January 11, 2022

Our Kauaʻi District Health Office announced 243 new cases of COVID-19 today, Tuesday, Jan. 11. Today's cases bring the number of active cases on our island to 1,028, with 10 hospitalized, and 6,019 cumulative cases. . There are a total of 19 Kauaʻi COVID fatalities to date.

The Hawaii Department of Health officials reported 2,929 new confirmed and probable coronavirus infections today, bringing the state's total since the start of the pandemic to 150,028 cases. No new virus-related fatalities were reported today so the statewide COVID-19 death toll remains 1,105.

Covid Testing is in high demand on Kauaʻi. "Our test positivity rate is 17%. That means more than one of every six people getting tested on Kauaʻi is testing positive," Mayor Derek Kawakami said Monday afternoon. That's still the lowest rate in the islands. getting a test can be time-consuming for some facing long lines or unable to find an appointment. Today, the Kauaʻi War Memorial Convention Hall in Lihu'e, which offers free testing daily, ran out of appointment tickets within little more than an hour after opening. For more information about Covid testing sites on Kauai go to Kauai.gov/covid test.

Governor Ige confirms a booster shot will soon be required to be considered "fully vaccinated" under Hawaii's Safe Travels program. That means, those traveling without proof of a booster dose will have to quarantine for ten days after landing on the islands, unless they present a recent negative COVID test result. The governor says the change is at least two weeks away from becoming official.

The Navy will comply with the state of Hawaii's order to defuel its Red Hill fuel storage facility. A military spokesperson confirmed the decision last night, meaning the 20 underground tanks at the World War Two-era facility will be drained and repaired. The state Department of Health issued the order in early December, after the latest jet fuel leak from the facility tainted the tap water running to thousands of homes supplied by the Navy's water line, and sickened hundreds of residents. It's unclear when the tanks will be emptied.

An estimated 14-hundred to 15-hundred of Hawaii's frontline healthcare workers are now off the job because of coronavirus infections or exposure. That's a 41-percent increase from last week. The state has requested 950 traveling frontline healthcare workers from the federal government, but FEMA has yet to approve that request. Meanwhile The Healthcare Association of Hawaii is also bringing in about 250 traveling nurses this weekend.

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Local Kauaʻi News – Wednesday January 12, 2022

Kauaʻi District Health Office announced 197 new cases of COVID-19 today, Wednesday, Jan. 12. Today's cases bring the number of active cases to 952, with seven hospitalized, and 6,216 cumulative cases. There have been a total of 19 Kauaʻi COVID fatalities to date.

State of Hawaii Department of Health officials today reported five new coronavirus-related deaths and 3,512 new confirmed and probable infections statewide, bringing the state's totals since the start of the pandemic to 1,110 fatalities and 153,540 cases.

Three former Honolulu city officials are facing federal charges after turning themselves into the FBI. Former City Managing Director Roy A-may-me-ah, former Corporate Council Donna Leong and former Honolulu Police Commission Chair Max Sword face charges they defrauded the federal government. The investigation concerns the 250-thousand dollar payout to former police chief Louis Kealoha. Kealoha, his wife and others were convicted of conspiracy in 2019. All three former officials were set to be arraigned today.

The Department of Health is relaxing its coronavirus quarantine rules to get students and teachers back in classrooms sooner. The isolation period for students and staff has been slashed to five full days since COVID symptoms first appeared, or five full days after the person first tested positive, regardless of their vaccination status. Those who have been exposed to an infected person are urged to quarantine for five days, but now, that's only if they aren't vaccinated, or if they're an adult who hasn't taken a booster shot.

The Blood Bank of Hawaii is now facing one of its most extreme supply shortages in years. As of yesterday, there are just four hours of universal blood left on the shelves. It usually has at least a one-week supply. Officials say there's traditionally a shortage after the holidays. But, rainy weather and the Omicron variant-driven coronavirus case surge have led to an even lower donor turnout than usual. The Blood Bank of Hawaii needs 150 donors per day to keep up with supply needs, but it's currently getting just about half of that.

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Local Kauaʻi News – Thursday January 13, 2022

Our Kauaʻi District Health Office announced 342 new cases of COVID-19 today, Thursday, Jan. 13. Today's cases bring the number of active cases to 1,089, with six hospitalized, and 6,558 cumulative cases. . There have been a total of 19 Kauaʻi COVID fatalities to date.

Hawaii Department of Health officials today reported four new coronavirus-related deaths and 3,392 new confirmed and probable infections statewide, bringing the state's totals since the start of the pandemic to 1,114 fatalities and 156,932 cases.

Paul Zina, our Kauai Complex Area Superintendent, is announcing That KIF athletic Activities have been paused for one week beginning yesterday and ending January 18. Families and athletes may use this time frame to get the Covid booster if their initial vaccination is outside of five months. On January 19, 2022 the KIF will resume its regular schedule of games and practices and a ten day quarantine period for close Covid contacts will be in effect. The Covid booster shot is now the recommended mitigation for students in high risk activities such as sports

Summer Lee Estacio, age 17, of Līhuʻe, was reported missing on Tuesday around 11 a.m. The last time she was seen was on Monday walking toward Kalena Park in Līhuʻe around 4 p.m. She was last seen wearing blue slacks, a blue hooded jacket, and white tennis shoes. Estacio is 5 feet 4 inches tall and weighs approximately 110 pounds. She has brown eyes and brown hair. She is known to frequent the island's skateparks, as well as the Līhuʻe and Hanapēpē areas. Anyone with information about Estacio's whereabouts on Kauaʻi is urged to call KPD Dispatch at 241-1711. To make an anonymous tip, please visit Crime Stoppers Kauaʻi at cskauai.org

The first cruise ship arriving in the islands in 22 months brought passengers infected with coronavirus. The Grand Princess arrived at Kahului Harbor yesterday morning with about two-thousand guests and crew members onboard. State officials confirm passengers have tested positive for coronavirus and are isolating in their rooms. But, no number has been given by the state nor Princess Cruises. The company says it's up to the CDC to provide that information. The ship was on Kauai earlier this week.

U.S. Senator of Hawaii Brian Schatz is isolating at home after testing positive for COVID. He announced his diagnosis today and called it a "breakthrough case." Schatz is fully-vaccinated and boosted. The senator says he is asymptomatic and expects to be back in the office "soon."

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Local Kauaʻi News – Friday January 14, 2022

Our Kauaʻi District Health Office announced 312 new cases of COVID-19 today, Friday, Jan. 14. Today's cases bring the number of active cases to 1,080, with seven hospitalized, and 6,870 cumulative cases. There have been a total of 19 Kauaʻi COVID fatalities to date.

The state of Hawaii Department of Health officials today reported three new coronavirus-related deaths and 3,099 new confirmed and probable infections statewide, bringing the state's totals since the start of the pandemic to 1,117 fatalities and 160,031 cases.

Due to issues with the Kekaha Landfill's scaling system, the landfill remains closed for residential trash and green waste until further notice. However, the landfill is open for commercial use. Officials advise the public to use the Hanapēpē refuse transfer station for disposing of residential trash and green waste until further notice.

The pipeline responsible for contaminating the Navy's water supply with jet fuel was completely unknown to crews at Red Hill. During a tour of the fuel storage facility last week, the Navy told state lawmakers it didn't even know that pipeline existed. The drain line is designed to collect naturally occurring moisture and drain it into the Red Hill water well. But, on November 20th, it was directly injected with fuel, which went right into the drinking water supply and started entering homes about a week later. The Navy says it didn't know about the drain line until someone looked at the facility's blueprints from 1941.

Interim Department of Education Superintendent Keith Hayashi is apologizing for underreporting coronavirus case counts at Hawaii's schools. His remarks came after the Hawaii State Teachers Association reported 41 schools are withholding case counts. Those schools haven't posted their infection totals on the DOE's public dashboard since at least last month, even though the law says they must do so weekly. Hayashi says the DOE is following up with the schools and making sure their numbers are updated. The state teachers' union says large schools like Waianae High School haven't reported their case counts since October, and some schools haven't done so since as far back as August.

University of Hawaii community colleges are planning to provide over one-thousand unemployed or underemployed Hawaii residents a free training and employment program statewide. Some of the courses offered for Spring 2022 include medical coding, pharmacy technician, cybersecurity and HVAC. UH President David Lassner said in a news release that a large part of the mission of UH community colleges to build a "workforce pipeline" that meets local needs for high-demand, living wage jobs. The program is free, and also provides a 100-percent tuition subsidy that covers all costs.

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Local Kaua'i News – Monday January 17, 2022

Chiefess Kamakahelei Middle School will be going to full distance learning for all students starting Tuesday Jan. 18th for the rest of this calendar week (4 days). The school is planning to resume in person learning next Monday Jan. 24th. The school is being heavily impacted by Covid isolation and quarantine requirements. The announcement was made by Chiefess Kamakahelei Principal Jean Morris this afternoon.. She advises that if the child's Chromebook was left at the school please call 241-3200 as soon as possible so parents can be pick them up at the office from 8 until 3 tomorrow 9/18. Questions? Call 241-3200. A copy of the announcement can be viewed on our Kong Radio facebook page.

Our Kaua'i District Health Office announced 141 new cases of COVID-19 today, Monday, Jan. 17. Today's cases bring the number of active cases to 836, with seven hospitalized, and 7,408 cumulative cases. There have been a total of 19 Kaua'i COVID fatalities to date.

The State Hawaii Department of Health officials reported 4,700 new confirmed and probable coronavirus infections today, bringing the state's total since the start of the pandemic to 174,586 cases. No new virus-related fatalities were reported today so the statewide COVID-19 death toll remains 1,126.

Hawaii may soon be requiring COVID booster shots for anyone traveling to the islands. Governor David Ige [[EE-gay]] told reporters that his office is considering changing its definition of "fully vaccinated." Travelers who aren't boosted would have to isolate for five days upon arrival at their own expense. Ige promised that there would be several weeks' notice of any rule change to give travelers and the hospitality community time to react. The CDC currently does not have any guidance on if booster shots should be required for international or domestic travel.

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Local Kauaʻi News – Tuesday January 18, 2022

Kauaʻi District Health Office announced 283 new cases of COVID-19 today, Tuesday, Jan. 18. Today's cases bring the number of active cases on our island to 771, with six hospitalized, and 7,691 cumulative cases.

The State of Hawaii Department of Health officials reported 6,252 new confirmed and probable coronavirus infections today, bringing the state's total since the start of the pandemic to 180,838 cases. Today's case count is a new single-day record for Hawaii, the statewide COVID-19 death toll remains 1,126.

Firefighters extinguished a structure fire in Līhu'e at the transitional housing site at Pua Ioke on Monday evening. No injuries were reported. Fire personnel arrived on scene at approximately 8:40 p.m. and discovered smoke from the unit's window. Shortly after, firefighters gained entry into the building and quickly extinguished the fire. Preliminary estimates of damages are \$16,000. According to a preliminary report, the fire originated in the kitchen. However, the cause of ignition is under investigation.

A fire in Hanalei early Monday morning displaced two residents. No injuries were reported. Firefighters responded to a report of an explosion and then confirmed a structure fire in Hanalei on Weke Road at approximately 1 a.m. on Monday. Fire personnel discovered two single-story dwellings fully engulfed in flames, with neighboring properties beginning to flame. Firefighters cleared the scene at approximately 7:30 a.m. Both structures are considered a total loss. Damages are estimated at \$952,800. The cause of the fire remains under investigation.

More than 100 nurses and other medical professionals are helping The Queen's Healthcare Systems cope with the COVID surge. A company source reports that the staffers, have been put to work both at Queen's Punchbowl facility and in West Oahu. The 115 caregivers, including nurses, respiratory therapists and at least one radiologic tech, reportedly arrived over the weekend. Their first day of the job was yesterday.

Crews are hoping to finish what they started after drone video located a giant whale in distress off Kauai. Authorities say members of NOAA and Coast Guard personnel were able to come to the stricken animal's aid on Sunday in waters of Brennecke's Beach in Poipu. However, they reportedly were unable to complete the job before it got too dark. Some rope and other debris remained attached to the animal's mouth and left pectoral fin. Officials say they hope to relocate the whale today and remove the rest of the marine debris.

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Local Kauaʻi News – Wednesday January 19, 2022

The State of Hawaii Department of Health officials reported 3,929 new confirmed and probable coronavirus infections today, bringing the state's total since the start of the pandemic to 184,767 cases. No new virus-related fatalities were reported today so the statewide COVID-19 death toll remains 1,126.

The University of Hawaii today announced the largest cash gift in UH history. Kauai resident Mark Zukerberg and wife Pricilla Chan are donating 50 million dollars over the next 7 years to support the university's Hawaii Institute of Marine Biology. Among other goals the money will be used to study changing ocean conditions and enhancing coastal resilience from storm and sea level rise.

Hawaii's lawmakers reconvene for the 2022 legislative session. It started at ten o'clock this morning with opening day floor sessions in both the House and Senate. Economic recovery, statewide teacher shortages, and the minimum wage are expected to be this year's main topics. Lawmakers will also be considering bills that promote food security and options for offering low-income home rentals to the homeless.

The University of Hawaii's ten campuses will stick with remote learning for an extra week after the state broke another record for coronavirus cases reported in a single day. The first three weeks of the spring semester will now be conducted mostly off-campus, save for a few exceptions. Classes are now scheduled to return to their originally scheduled formats, whether they be in-person or hybrid, on January 31st. U.H.

The future of the controversial Thirty Meter Telescope could be decided this week. Tomorrow, the University of Hawaii Board of Regents will meet to discuss their proposed master plan for the summit of Mauna Kea. The plan would be in place for 20 years, and it prioritizes the construction of the telescope. U.H. officials have received more than 14-hundred public comments on the draft master plan so far.

A new study is ranking Hawaii as the worst state to drive in. WalletHub released its list of the best and worst states to drive in for 2022 and Hawaii came in dead last. Factors that went into organizing the ranking included cost of ownership and maintenance, traffic and infrastructure, access to vehicles and insurance, as well as safety. Hawaii had the fewest auto repair shops per capita and one of the highest average gas prices in the country. The list also reported that rush hour traffic played a factor. WalletHub said the best places to drive included Iowa, Oklahoma and Kansas.

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Local Kauaʻi News – Thursday January 20, 2022

Our Kauaʻi District Health Office announced 257 new cases of COVID-19 today, Thursday, Jan. 20. Today's cases bring the number of active cases to 814, with six hospitalized, and 8,283 cumulative cases. There have been a total of 19 Kauaʻi COVID fatalities to date.

The State of Hawaii Department of Health officials today reported nine new coronavirus-related deaths and 5,911 new confirmed and probable infections statewide, bringing the state's totals since the start of the pandemic to 1,135 fatalities and 190,678 cases. All nine deaths were on Oahu.

The number of people hospitalized in Hawaii has reached a new all time high. Yesterday, the state reported two-thousand-395 hospitalizations, with 399 of those patients admitted with COVID infections. The record numbers come while staffing shortages continue to impact hospitals, but more help is officially on the way. Yesterday, FEMA approved emergency funding for nearly one-thousand traveling healthcare workers to come to Hawaii.

The state House of Representatives is planning to commit 600-million-dollars to Hawaiian Homelands. Lawmakers say a "historic" piece of legislation will be introduced in a few days. Much of the funding would be committed to building affordable housing. Democrats in the House also plan to amend state laws and require the Navy to close the Red Hill fuel storage facility. Those and other goals were announced by lawmakers yesterday, on opening day of this year's legislative session.

The Navy could soon be facing a class-action lawsuit stemming from its fuel-tainted water crisis. Twenty of Oahu's military and civilian families have now filed legal claims against the Navy, detailing the severe health affects they and their loved ones suffered after drinking and bathing in jet fuel-laced tap water in recent months. The 20 claimants are working with private attorney and former Hawaii Attorney General Margery Bronster. Active-duty military are not allowed to file claims, but their family members are.

Wildlife crews removed about two-thousand-feet of fishing gear from an adult humpback whale swimming off Kauai. A man flying his drone off Poipu first spotted the whale entangled in heavy gauge line on Sunday, and reported it to NOAA. Most of the gear has been removed, but crews still have work to do because of how bad the whale was entangled. The rest of the gear will be taken off at another time. NOAA officials placed a tracking buoy on the whale so they can find it again.

It might be less than a month before a booster shot is required to be considered fully vaccinated against coronavirus on Oahu. Mayor Blangiardi says the target date for adding a booster shot requirement to Safe Access Oahu is February 18th. . Right now, just 32-percent of Oahu residents have received the extra dose, meaning they'd be some of the only ones allowed inside certain indoor businesses whenever the change to Safe Access Oahu officially kicks in. Those who aren't vaccinated could still get into indoor businesses by showing a recent negative COVID test result.

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Local Kauaʻi News
2022 - Quarter 1 – January**

Local Kauaʻi News – Friday January 21, 2022

Our Kauaʻi District Health Office announced 269 new cases of COVID-19 today, Friday, Jan. 21. Today's cases bring the number of active cases to 924, with six hospitalized, and 8,552 cumulative cases. . There have been a total of 19 Kauaʻi COVID fatalities to date.

The State of Hawaii Department of Health officials today reported two new coronavirus-related deaths and 4,473 new confirmed and probable infections statewide, bringing the state's totals since the start of the pandemic to 1,137 fatalities and 195,151 cases.

Starting Monday, a booster shot will be required to be considered fully vaccinated against coronavirus in Maui County. The Safer Outside program will include a booster requirement for admission into indoor bars, gyms, and restaurants, plus other locations and events. Maui is the first of the major counties to add a booster requirement. The change was going to kick in earlier this month, but was delayed to give businesses and residents more time to adjust or to get boosted.

The University of Hawaii is planning to require COVID booster shots for all students and employees. While a deadline hasn't been picked, officials are considering mandating the booster next month, then officially adopting a new policy in the coming summer or fall. U.H. President David Lassner also says the university would stop using the term "fully vaccinated," and instead use "up to date with your vaccination," since boosters may prove to be an annual necessity.

After five years of debate and discussion, the University of Hawaii Board of Regents has approved a new Mauna Kea Master Plan. The plan lists management guidelines and the university's vision for the summit for the next 20 years, replacing the last 20-year master plan. It notably limits the number of telescopes placed at the summit, but does not specifically mention the controversial Thirty Meter Telescope project.

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2022 - Quarter 1 – January**

Local Kauaī News – Monday January 24, 2022

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Local Kauaʻi News
2022 - Quarter 1 – January**

Local Kauaʻi News – Tuesday January 25, 2022

Hawaii Department of Health officials reported 1,904 new confirmed and probable coronavirus infections today, bringing the state’s total since the start of the pandemic to 206,837 cases. No new virus-related fatalities were reported today so the statewide COVID-19 death toll remains 1,146.

A crash involving a pickup truck and a moped at the Kūhiō Highway and Ohia Street intersection caused one fatality Sunday evening. According to a preliminary report, around 6:40 p.m., 59-year-old Andrew Derego of Kapaʻa, was operating a red moped and was heading southbound on Kūhiō Highway, crossing the Ohia Street intersection, when his moped was struck by a white Toyota pickup truck operated by a 61-year-old Kapaʻa woman. Derego sustained serious injuries and was transported to Wilcox Medical Center where he later succumbed to his injuries.

– Kauaʻi police arrested 58-year-old Paul Bun Chung Say of Kapaʻa on January 19 for numerous charges, including several counts of promoting dangerous drugs and multiple charges related to the possession of illegal weapons and ammunition. The Kauaʻi Police Department’s Vice Section enacted search warrants on Say and recovered methamphetamine, Fentanyl, marijuana , along with numerous scheduled drugs (pills) that need to be sent for testing . He was booked and is being held on a \$1 million bail.

Hawaii is getting back to work after unemployment figures reached a record high at the beginning of the pandemic. New data shows, last month, the statewide jobless rate fell to a 21-month low of five-point-seven-percent. It was at six-percent in November. The unemployment rate was nearly 22-percent at the start of the pandemic. Right before the pandemic, the unemployment rate fell to two-point-one-percent. It has now declined for eleven straight months and is below six-percent for the first time since March of 2020.

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Local Kauaʻi News
2022 - Quarter 1 – January**

Local Kauaʻi News – Wednesday January 26, 2022

Menehune Road reopened to all traffic on Tuesday, Jan. 25 after the completion of rock scaling work on the area affected by the Jan. 4th landslide. Ongoing temporary road closures may still be necessary for the next few weeks, as continuous work on the slope is needed.

The Department of Health has issued High Bacteria Count Advisory at Lydgate Park. potentially harmful microorganisms may be present in the water. Swimming at beaches with pollution in the water may make you ill. The beach has been posted and this advisory will remain in effect until water sample results no longer exceed the high bacteria threshold

Kauaʻi District Health Office announced 159 new cases of COVID-19 on Wednesday, Jan. 26. Today's cases bring the number of active cases to 781, with 10 hospitalized, and 9,533 cumulative cases. There have been a total of 19 Kauaʻi COVID fatalities to date.

Hawaii Department of Health officials today reported three new coronavirus-related deaths and 2,050 new confirmed and probable infections statewide, bringing the state's totals since the start of the pandemic to 1,149 fatalities and 208,887 cases.

A bill to raise the minimum wage to 18-dollars per hour is moving forward. Hawaii's current minimum wage is ten-dollars-ten-cents and has been so for four years. If the bill is passed, it will raise the minimum wage in three-dollar increments by 2026. A recent state report found that residents would need to make around 18-dollars and 63-cents to be able to afford basics like food, housing and transportation.

Governor Ige is delaying his decision on whether to order a permanent closure of the Navy's Red Hill fuel storage facility. Yesterday, Ige said he's waiting for the results of an independent review of the Navy's operations at Red Hill before making a final call. Last month, Ige issued an emergency order demanding the Navy empty its underground fuel tanks and temporarily suspend all operations at the site.

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Local Kaua'i News
2022 - Quarter 1 – January**

Local Kaua'i News – Thursday January 27, 2022

A large fire in the Wailua houselots triggered evacuations on Wednesday night, according to the Kauai Fire Department. According to fire officials, the flames broke out at the home on Kihei Road around 9 p.m. By the time crews arrived, the home was already fully involved. Officials said neighboring homes were evacuated, but, there was no damage to surrounding properties. Fire officials said no injuries have been reported. The cause of the blaze is under investigation.

Kaua'i District Health Office announced 222 new cases of COVID-19 on Thursday, Jan. 27. Today's cases bring the number of active cases to 755, with nine hospitalized, and 9,755 cumulative cases. There have been 19 Covid fatalities on Kauai since the start of the pandemic.

The State of Hawaii Department of Health officials today reported 10 new coronavirus-related deaths and 2,380 new confirmed and probable infections statewide, bringing the state's totals since the start of the pandemic to 1,159 fatalities and 211,267 cases.

Hawaii's hospitalization total is nearing an all-time record again. Nearly 24-hundred people were hospitalized statewide yesterday, with 414 of them being treated for coronavirus. The Healthcare Association of Hawaii is expecting more challenges for hospitals in the coming weeks. While the state likely reached its peak of the Omicron variant surge this week, the hospitalization peak isn't expected to come until a week or two later. Many facilities are already at or near full capacity.

A newly proposed law could lead to a lot more drunk driving arrests on the islands. A measure moving through the state legislature would cut the legal limit for drunk driving nearly in half. Right now, the legal blood-alcohol content limit for DUI is a point-zero-eight and below. Lawmakers want to drop it to a point-zero-five. That's the legal limit in 90 other countries and in Utah. The proposal will be subject to a public hearing in a few weeks.

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Local Kauaʻi News
2022 - Quarter 1 – January**

Local Kauaʻi News – Friday January 28, 2022

Our Kauaʻi Police Department (KPD) is asking for your help with locating a missing person. Rachel Vegas (AKA “PROMISE”), age 32, of California was last seen off Aliomanu Rd. in Anahola. Vegas is 5 feet 8 inches tall and weighs approximately 170 pounds. She has wavy, shoulder length blond/light brown hair, brown eyes and was last seen wearing a light blue t-shirt and black and white baggy leggings. Anyone with information about Vegas’ whereabouts is urged to call KPD Dispatch at 241-1711.

Our Kauaʻi District Health Office announced 205 new cases of COVID-19 today, Friday, Jan. 28. Today’s cases bring the number of active cases to 791, with nine hospitalized, and 9,960 cumulative cases. There have been 19 Covid fatalities on Kauai since the start of the pandemic.

The State of Hawaii Department of Health officials today reported five new coronavirus-related deaths and 1,907 new confirmed and probable infections statewide, bringing the state’s totals since the start of the pandemic to 1,164 fatalities and 213,174 cases.

The state is letting the Navy discharge water from its fuel-tainted Red Hill Shaft into the Halawa Stream. The Hawaii Department of Health has given the Navy the okay to pump contaminated water out of the shaft, treat it, then release it into the stream. The DOH, which will oversee the process, says this will prevent further contamination from spreading through the aquifer.

A young humpback whale is swimming freely again after getting entangled in heavy mooring line and a buoy off the coast of Maui. The struggling yearling was spotted on Wednesday morning. Crews with NOAA were called and spent the rest of the day carefully cutting 140-feet of line that was wrapped around the whale’s tale and fluke. Some of the line was cutting into the tale, but aside from that, the whale appeared to be in good condition.

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Local Kaua'i News
2022 - Quarter 1 – January**

Local Kaua'i News – Monday January 31, 2022

Kaua'i District Health Office announced 127 new cases of COVID-19 today, Monday, Jan. 31. Today's cases bring the number of active cases to 619, with 13 hospitalized, and 10,349 cumulative cases. There have been 19 Covid fatalities on Kauai since the start of the pandemic.

The state of Hawaii Department of Health officials today reported one new coronavirus-related death and 1,513 new confirmed and probable infections statewide, bringing the state's totals since the start of the pandemic to 1,181 fatalities and 219,288 cases.

There is no apparent effect on any volcanoes after a 4.0-magnitude earthquake shook Hawaii Island this morning. It was felt about five miles northeast of Pahala. Hawaiian Volcano Observatory officials said the quake appeared to be part of the ongoing seismic swarm. Over ten-thousand earthquakes have been part of the seismic swarm, but this is only the fourth quake over magnitude four.

Three people are dead following a highway crash on Hawaii Island last night. Hawaii Island Police are investigating the three-car collision that occurred on Highway 11 in the Glenwood area. Police report that speed and inattention appear to be a factor. One car allegedly swerved into oncoming traffic, hitting one car head-on and causing another to sustain minor damage.

The candidates for Honolulu police chief might have to prove they can handle not getting much sleep if they want the job. The state police union has a new proposal that calls for candidates staying awake for 18 to 20 hours straight to prove they're cut out for the pressure, physical, and mental requirements of the job. The idea was suggested last week, during a meeting between the SHOPO and the consulting firm hired by Honolulu. The idea is to mentally drain applicants for HPD chief to simulate them working double shifts.