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KQNG FM93.5 / KSHK 103.1FM / KSRF 95.9FM / KUAI 104.5FM/570AM
Local Kauaī News
2022 - Quarter 1 – February

Local Kauaī News – Tuesday February 1, 2022

Kauaī District Health Office announced 98 new cases of COVID-19 today, Tuesday, Feb. 1. Today's cases bring the number of active cases to 552, with 13 hospitalized, and 10,447 cumulative cases. There have been 19 Covid fatalities on Kauai since the start of the pandemic.

State of Hawaii Department of Health officials reported 1,068 new confirmed and probable coronavirus infections today, bringing the state's total since the start of the pandemic to 220,356 cases. No new virus-related fatalities were reported today so the statewide COVID-19 death toll remains 1,181.

The U.S. Department of Defense will appeal Hawaii's emergency order calling for the draining and repair of the Navy's Red Hill fuel storage facility tomorrow. The Hawaii Department of Health calls the decision a disappointment, after the Navy, in several public forums, said it was complying with the emergency order. Meanwhile The ongoing water crisis stemming from the Navy's operations at Red Hill could have major impacts on Oahu's construction projects this summer. The Board of Water Supply says there could even be water usage restrictions for the entire island this summer, if its wells near Red Hill remain shut down. The head of the BWS, Ernest Lau, says new building projects and other new customers may not be allowed to use the system's water this summer.

Kauaī Police Department (KPD) recently recognized Detective Philip Bonquel as Officer of the Month during January's Police Commission meeting. Bonquel who was off duty was driving through his Hanamāūlu neighborhood, he noticed a man lying on the ground in the driveway of a residence, and a woman nearby acting distraught. Bonquel found a 56-year-old male unresponsive and not breathing. Bonquel administered CPR for approximately seven minutes. Kauaī Fire Department and EMT personnel, arrived and relieved Bonquel and transported the man to Wilcox Medical Center. According to EMTs and Wilcox emergency medical staff who treated the man, it was Bonquel's swift action that directly contributed to saving the man's life.

A humpback whale that was entangled in 25-hundred-feet of cord is finally swimming freely off the coast of Kauai. Crews with NOAA first started freeing the whale on January 16th, and finished removing the cord from its fins yesterday. However, 15-feet of fishing line is still embedded in the whale's mouth. The whale was found emaciated and suffering from patches of lice last month.

New license plates paying tribute to the Polynesian Voyaging Society are now on sale. The plates are being sold for 35-dollars and 50-cents apiece. Twenty-dollars from each purchase will go to the Polynesian Voyaging Society. There are 18-thousand of the special plates available on Oahu, and 30-thousand available statewide.

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Local Kauaʻi News – Wednesday February 2, 2022

Kauaʻi District Health Office announced 155 new cases of COVID-19 today, Wednesday, Feb. 2. Today's cases bring the number of active cases to 544, with 12 hospitalized, and 10,602 cumulative cases. There have been 19 Covid fatalities since the pandemic began.

Hawaii Department of Health officials today reported 10 new coronavirus-related deaths and 1,177 new confirmed and probable infections statewide, bringing the state's totals since the start of the pandemic to 1,191 fatalities and 221,533 cases.

A new satellite will soon be able to help with forecasting weather throughout the state. The NOAA satellite is scheduled to launch on March 1st in Cape Canaveral, Florida. Officials say the satellite will help track Pacific Ocean-based storm systems and volcanic smoke activity on the Big Island. It will also be able to help provide early warning of power grid issues by monitoring solar activity and space weather.

State lawmakers are pushing for a new bill to bring back retired educators to fill Hawaii classrooms. A current tax law prevents retired teachers from returning to their previous position for at least one full year, however, lawmakers are looking to suspend the law for emergencies. The proposal was unanimously passed today, but still has multiple hearings to go before it can go into effect.

Red light cameras could be coming to intersections in Honolulu this June. The Hawaii Department of Transportation is launching a two-year red light camera pilot program. Ten intersections will be chosen from a list of 14 currently under consideration. Drivers who run red lights will get warnings for the first 30 days after the program starts up, then they'll get citations in the mail. The DOT says about 19-hundred crashes were caused by people running red lights between 2015 and 2020. The pilot program will cost the state two-point-eight-million-dollars.

Hawaii's electric vehicle owners could soon be paying a mileage tax. A new bill under discussion in the state Senate would add a mileage tax, since electric car owners don't have to pay the state's gas tax. Owners would be charged during annual safety checks, though it's still unclear how much they'd have to pay. Lawmakers say the rate would not be higher than the average annual gas tax payment. The Department of Transportation says a mileage tax will likely eventually apply to all drivers in Hawaii.

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Local Kauaʻi News – Thursday February 3, 2022

Kauaʻi District Health Office announced 151 new cases of COVID-19 today, Thursday, Feb. 3. Today's cases bring the number of active cases to 595, with 13 hospitalized, and 10,753 cumulative cases. There have been 19 Covid fatalities on Kauai since the pandemic began.

Hawaii Department of Health officials today reported three new coronavirus-related deaths and 1,532 new confirmed and probable infections statewide, bringing the state's totals since the start of the pandemic to 1,194 fatalities and 223,065 cases.

The Navy has officially filed an appeal against the state's order to drain the fuel tanks at Red Hill. The Navy argues the emergency order is unlawful, and says the state's finding that the underground fuel storage facility presents an imminent threat to Oahu's drinking water supply is wrong. The Navy calls the finding "clearly erroneous, arbitrary, capricious, and an abuse of discretion." Those words come even though Red Hill has a history of fuel leaks, including one in late November that's still affecting thousands of people. Yesterday was the deadline for the Navy to submit a plan for draining the tanks to the Department of Health. The DOH says the Navy "is unwilling to do what's right to protect the people of Hawaii and its own service members."

Lawmakers are planning to spend a quarter-million-dollars to replace every lock and key in their offices at the state capitol building. It's all because someone lost the set of master keys. State lawmakers first realized the issue on opening day of this year's legislative session. A staffer went into each of their offices and delivered the traditional opening day lei. Several members of the House were concerned by someone outside of their staff having such easy access to their offices and the material inside. Plans are now underway to re-key the office doors of all 25 state senators and 51 House members.

Hawaiian Airlines employees still have to follow a coronavirus vaccination mandate. Yesterday, a federal judge denied a request to stop the company's vaccination mandate. That request was filed by seven current and former employees. In a lawsuit, they claimed the company policy violated federal law. U.S. District Court Judge Jill Otake says the group failed to meet any of the four requirements needed to be granted a temporary restraining order or injunction against the vaccination policy.

Lawmakers are considering making it easier for Hawaii drivers to renew their licenses. Two bills that would allow online driver's license renewal are making their way through the legislature right now. The Senate bill will hear discussion today. The bill would require drivers to provide a note from the doctor, proving they're fit to drive. The Department of Transportation told Honolulu Civil Beat that it wants to work with legislators before moving the bill forward.

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

Local Kaua'i News – Friday February 4, 2022

Kaua'i District Health Office announced 118 new cases of COVID-19 on today, Friday, Feb. 4. Today's cases bring the number of active cases to 548, with 13 hospitalized, and 10,871 cumulative cases. Kauai has had 19 Covid fatalities since the start of the pandemic.

The State of Hawaii Department of Health officials today reported 10 new coronavirus-related deaths and 1,192 new confirmed and probable infections statewide, bringing the state's totals since the start of the pandemic to 1,204 fatalities and 224,257 cases.

People could soon get paid for reporting their neighbors for setting off illegal fireworks. Today, the House Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce will hear and discuss seven newly proposed bills about fireworks. One of them would make each county offer a cash reward to people who report illegal fireworks. It's unclear if the state or individual counties would set the reward amount.

Tourists coming to Hawaii could be saying goodbye to small, complimentary toiletries at hotels. A newly proposed bill would outlaw small plastic bottles of shampoo and soap. Instead, hotels would have to provide those commodities in bulk dispensers. Lawmakers believe the change will eliminate plastic waste, saying each hotel chain can produce hundreds of millions of those little bottles each year. If passed, the law would take effect in 2024.

Lawmakers are considering making it easier for Hawaii drivers to renew their licenses. Two bills that would allow online driver's license renewal are making their way through the legislature right now. The bill would require drivers to provide a note from the doctor, proving they're fit to drive. The Department of Transportation says that it wants to work with legislators before moving the bill forward.

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Local Kauaʻi News – Monday February 7, 2022

Kauaʻi District Health Office announced 74 new cases of COVID-19 today Monday, Feb. 7. Today's cases bring the number of active cases to 433, with 12 hospitalized, and 11,119 cumulative cases. There have been 19 Covid Fatalities on Kauai since the start of the pandemic.

Hawaii Department of Health officials reported 833 new confirmed and probable coronavirus infections today, bringing the state's total since the start of the pandemic to 227,284 cases. No new virus-related fatalities were reported today so the statewide COVID-19 death toll remains 1,226. For the first time since December, the State reported less than a thousand new infections in a single day.

Starting today, a booster shot is no longer needed to be considered "fully vaccinated" against coronavirus in Maui County. The county is relaxing the rules of its Safer Outside program now that the Omicron wave is slowing down significantly. For the past several weeks, only fully vaccinated, plus boosted, patrons were allowed inside indoor businesses like restaurants and bars. If not, they had to present a recent, negative test. Maui County was the first and still only county with such a requirement

Senator Brian Schatz says funding has been secured to drain the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility. The senator announced today that he has secured 100-million-dollars in federal funding for the project. The bill the funding is attached to also directs the Department of Defense to comply with the state's order issued in December to defuel the facility immediately. An oil spill at the facility in November contaminated the drinking water system that services 93-thousand people on Oahu. Schatz said he is working with the Biden administration to receive additional funding.

- Two bills aimed at giving tax incentives for blood donations are making their way through the state's house of representatives. One of the bills would offer tax credits to people who donate blood at least four times a year. The other bill would provide credits to employers who organize blood drives. Supporters of the bills hope the tax incentives would drive up donations amid a state and nationwide blood shortage caused by the ongoing pandemic.

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Local Kaua'i News – Tuesday February 8, 2022

Kaua'i District Health Office announced a fatality and 84 new cases of COVID-19 today, Tuesday, Feb. 8. The fatality was a male resident in his 70s who was hospitalized. Our condolences go out to his ohana. Today's cases bring the number of active cases to 389, with nine hospitalized, and 11,203 cumulative cases. There are a total of 20 Kaua'i COVID fatalities to date.

Hawaii Department of Health officials reported 533 new confirmed and probable coronavirus infections today, bringing the state's total since the start of the pandemic to 227,817 cases.

An asphalt company has been slapped with a more than 107-thousand-dollar fine for polluting the waters of west Kauai. The company, Maui Asphalt Ten-Four, discharged pollutants from its site in Waimea without a permit and without pollution control methods in place. As part of the punishment, it will also have to form a pollution control plan and align with national discharge standards. During the five years the company has operated its site in West Kauai, pollutants were found in the water 43 different times.

State lawmakers are discussing a bill that would make harassing or intimidating school officials a misdemeanor crime. Interim State Superintendent Keith Hayashi supports the proposed bill, saying a growing number of school leaders have been harassed and threatened because of coronavirus protocols. The DOE, in fact, specifically requested the bill, saying many school officials have been constantly badgered, called names, and received persistent phone calls in this pandemic era.

The man at the center of a nearly six-hour barricade situation in Windward Oahu is dead. A Honolulu police SWAT team rushed into the home near Kahana Bay at about 5:30 last night and found the man dead of an apparent gunshot wound. Everyone else who lives in the house was found unhurt. The incident first started at noon, when police received a call about an assault involving a 47-year-old man and a 60-year-old woman. The man armed and barricaded himself inside the home when officers arrived. Some drivers were stuck in a dead stop for five hours after cops closed a portion of Kamehameha Highway during the standoff, while some people living in the area were evacuated from their homes

Alcohol consumption is up 23-percent in Hawaii. A study by the American Addiction Centers found that most states saw alcohol consumption decrease by ten to 20-percent from 2020 to 2021. However, Hawaii saw a dramatic increase. The study showed that Hawaii residents who drink had 639 alcoholic beverages on average throughout the year.

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Local Kauaʻi News – Wednesday February 9, 2022

Kauaʻi District Health Office announced two fatalities and 49 new cases of COVID-19 today, Wednesday, Feb. 9. One fatality was in a male resident in his 70s who was hospitalized. The other fatality was a male resident in his 80s who was hospitalized. Our condolences go out to their friends and families. There are a total of 22 Kauaʻi COVID fatalities to date. Today's cases bring the number of active cases to 330, with seven hospitalized, and 11,252 cumulative cases.

Hawaii Department of Health officials today reported seven new coronavirus-related deaths and 519 new confirmed and probable infections statewide, bringing the state's totals since the start of the pandemic to 1,233 fatalities and 228,336 cases.

New court documents reveal former Senate Majority Leader Kalani English took bribes of thousands of dollars. The court documents say the alleged bribes came in exchange for legislative action, such as killing bills. There are also reports that Representative Ty Cullen also took over 20-thousand-dollars worth of bribes from an "industrial services contractor" in exchange for government-funded programs.

Governor David Ige will appoint a new state representative to replace Cullen. The Democratic party is tasked with submitting three nominees for Governor Ige to choose from for Cullen's replacement, and will recommend its candidates on February 20th. Ige has until April 9th to fill the seat.

A booster shot will not be needed to travel to Hawaii after all. Governor David Ige will no longer add a coronavirus booster requirement to the Safe Travels program, citing improving case numbers both on the islands and nationally. People flying to, or taking a cruise to the state can still skip ten-day quarantine if they're fully vaccinated or present a recent, negative test.

The two fuel leaks that happened at Red Hill last May and November were supposedly not caught on video. Congressman Kai Kahele says he was told the Navy's security cameras were disconnected because a contractor cut an electrical line several months prior. Kahele says during his visits to Red Hill, he saw security cameras in "two key locations" that should have filmed both fuel leaks. He asked Navy officials about the footage and even filed an official information request to see it, but was told it doesn't exist. The Navy says the electrical line powering the cameras was severed "inadvertently" in January of last year.

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Local Kaua'i News – Thursday February 10, 2022

Kaua'i District Health Office announced two fatalities and 88 new cases of COVID-19 on Thursday, Feb. 10. One fatality was a female visitor in her 60s who was hospitalized. The second fatality was a male resident in his 90s who was not hospitalized. Our condolences go out to their family ;and friends. There are a total of 24 Kaua'i COVID fatalities to date. Today's cases bring the number of active cases to 308, with six hospitalized, and 11,340 cumulative cases.

Hawaii Department of Health officials today reported six new coronavirus-related deaths and 1,195 new confirmed and probable infections statewide, bringing the state's totals since the start of the pandemic to 1,239 fatalities and 229,531 cases.

Lieutenant Governor Josh Green is officially running for governor. Green announced today that he has launched his campaign. In his announcement Green said, "Our fight against COVID has shown me that more than ever we need elected leaders we can trust, who care about people." He included affordable housing, high cost of living, and the homeless crisis in his campaign platform.

The former state legislators accused of accepting bribes are scheduled to enter guilty pleas on February 15th. Jamie Kelani English and Ty Cullen struck a plea deal with the U.S. Department of Justice. It turns out the company tied with the latest bribery scandal is a big political donor. The company, which has not been named, is a local industrial cleaning company and has taken several government contracts, including one for a million-dollars to sanitize Oahu's buses.

A security breach forced a brief lockdown of Kona International Airport. The Hawaii Department of Transportation says a man breached a secure area at about 6:15 last night, forcing the TSA to close its screening lines for about 45 minutes. That caused the delay of a couple flights, and passengers on board had to get off their planes and rescreen through security checkpoints as a precaution. They didn't get to take off for about two hours. The man at the center of the security breach fled the area and is still on the loose.

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Local Kaua'i News – Friday February 11, 2022

Kaua'i District Health Office announced 64 new cases of COVID-19 today, Friday, Feb. 11. Today's cases bring the number of active cases to 316, with six hospitalized, and 11,404 cumulative cases. There are a total of 24 Kaua'i COVID fatalities to date.

Hawaii Department of Health officials today reported eight new coronavirus-related deaths and 707 new confirmed and probable infections statewide, bringing the state's totals since the start of the pandemic to 1,247 fatalities and 230,238 cases.

A proposal being reviewed by state lawmakers would allow students to earn class credits for playing sports. That means, instead of being treated as extracurriculars, sports would become part of the statewide school curriculum. Proponents say, if the bill is passed, high school athletes would stop being shortchanged for the time they give up for practices and games. The Department of Education worries a student's performance on the field or court affecting their grade would take the focus off winning and competing.

Gas prices in Hawaii are up for the third week in a row. AAA Hawaii cited inflation and higher oil prices for the rise across the country, with oil close to one-hundred dollars a barrel. The average price in Hawaii is four-dollars and 44 cents, almost a dollar above the national average. Gas prices are close to hitting the record highs across the state, which were at their highest in 2011 and 2012.

The already high cost of living for Hawaii continues to rise. Consumer prices in Honolulu rose six-percent over the past year thanks to the higher costs of food and energy. This marks the highest rate of inflation for the state in more than 30 years. The U.S. as a whole saw a seven-point-five-percent increase, which is the biggest jump since February 1982.

The U.S. Department of Justice has indicted three former government contractors based in Hawaii for allegedly making illegal campaign donations. The trio of executives is accused of making contributions to help Maine Senator Susan Collins win reelection in 2020. Prosecutors say, at the time, the men were working for a defense contractor and were not allowed to contribute money to federal elections.

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Local Kaua'i News – Tuesday February 15, 2022

Our Kauai Police Department is asking you to be on the lookout for An extended furlough inmate who failed to return to his community residence here on Kauai. Ricardo Navor Junior was out of Kauai Community Correctional Center as part of an extended furlough and didn't return to his community residence by his 10:00 p.m. Sunday deadline. The 47-year-old is doing time for promoting a dangerous drug. His parole hearing is supposed to be later this month. Navor is 47 years old is 5'7" tall, weighs 200 pounds and has brown hair and eyes. Anyone with information as to his whereabouts is urged to call 911.

Kaua'i District Health Office announced 18 new cases of COVID-19 today, Tuesday, Feb. 15. Today's cases bring the number of active cases to 151, with eight hospitalized, and 11,566 cumulative cases. There are a total of 24 Kaua'i COVID fatalities to date.

The State of Hawaii Department of Health officials reported 294 new confirmed and probable coronavirus infections today, bringing the state's total since the start of the pandemic to 232,302 cases. No new virus-related fatalities were reported today so the statewide COVID-19 death toll remains 1,262.

Former state Senate Majority Leader Jamie Kalani English is facing up to 20 years in prison after pleading guilty to a federal charge this morning. English pleaded guilty to a single count of honest services wire fraud as part of a plea deal after being accused of taking bribes while in office. The former lawmaker will forfeit more than 15-thousand-dollars as part of the deal.

Lieutenant Governor Josh Green believes the state could be in good position to scale back more coronavirus restrictions in the coming weeks. The number of active cases is down 80-percent since the peak of the Omicron surge in mid-January, and the number of hospitalizations is down by 50-percent. Green says he'd soon feel comfortable recommending ending the Safe Travels program in mid-March. That's also about when federal funding and National Guard support helping run the program expires. Next, should be the end of Hawaii's indoor mask mandate in Green's opinion. Doctor Green says that shouldn't happen until coronavirus hospitalizations fall below 100. He expects that to happen within the next seven-to-ten days.

State health officials have lifted the drinking water advisory for the Red Hill housing area. That means residents are cleared to drink and cook with their tap water for the first time since it was contaminated with jet fuel in November. It's the first of 19 zones declared safe after fuel from the Navy's Red Hill storage facility polluted the drinking water supply. The zone contains 135 homes managed by the Army, and Red Hill elementary school.

New guidelines are requiring boats to slow down and not get near whales. It's peak season for the North Pacific humpback whales that migrate to Hawaii from Alaska. During this time, boats are required to travel no faster than 15 knots during general travel and 6 knots when within 400 yards of the whales. The species is protected by the Marine Mammal Protection Act. National Oceanic and

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Atmospheric Administration officials said a humpback whale calf found dead near Oahu's Wailuipē peninsula was most likely killed by a boat last week.

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Local Kauaʻi News – Wednesday February 16, 2022

Kauaʻi District Health Office announced 18 new cases of COVID-19 today, Wednesday, Feb. 16. Today's cases bring the number of active cases to 116, with six hospitalized, and 11,584 cumulative cases. There are a total of 24 Kauaʻi COVID fatalities to date.

Hawaii Department of Health officials today reported 12 new coronavirus-related deaths and 203 new confirmed and probable infections statewide, bringing the state's totals since the start of the pandemic to 1,274 fatalities and 232,505 cases.

A bill that would increase Hawaii's minimum wage is a step closer to becoming a law. It was advanced by The House Committee on Labor and Tourism Tuesday, and now heads to the House Finance Committee. The hourly minimum wage on the islands is currently ten-dollars and ten-cents. The bill calls for raising the minimum wage by a dollar every year until it reaches 18-dollars in 2030. Employers would be allowed to pay less than the minimum wage to employees who earn tips.

Former state lawmakers J. Kalani English and Ty Cullen have pleaded guilty to taking bribes in exchange for votes. Both men pleaded guilty to one count each of honest services wire fraud yesterday. They were paid off by a business owner in Honolulu, who then made money from cesspool conversions and wastewater policy. English and Cullen took cash in envelopes, hotel rooms in Las Vegas, dinners, and casino chips to gamble in New Orleans. They now each face up to two decades in federal prison and fines of up to a quarter-million-dollars.

Another former Honolulu city employee has admitted to taking bribes. Yesterday, ex-Department of Permitting and Planning employee Jason Dadez pleaded guilty to a count of honest services wire fraud in federal court. Dadez was a building inspector for the DPP and took thousands of dollars from a solar contractor to speed up the processing of their permit applications. He'll be sentenced in July.

ON Oahu The woman assaulted outside of the Kapolei police station Tuesday night is dead. EMS responded to the scene around 7 p.m. The woman was rushed to the hospital in critical condition. Police arrested 35-year-old Michael Armstrong at the station just before 8 p.m. He reportedly used a tree trunk to attack her. The motive for the crime remains unclear. Police have not released further details.

The man suspected of murdering a Waipahu acupuncturist is being released after posting one-million-dollars bond. Eric Thompson was arrested Monday for the shooting death of Jon Tokuhara inside his own acupuncture business last month. Prosecutors say Thompson was only in the business for 48 seconds and fired three shots. Detectives believe Thompson's wife and victim Jon Tokuhara were in a romantic relationship last year, which may point to a motive.

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Local Kauaʻi News – Thursday February 17, 2022

The U.S. Postal Service is hosting a two-day job fair from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Feb. 25 and 26 at the USPS's carrier annex facility adjacent to the Lihue airport. Postal officials hope to hire 20 new employees to fill positions as Rural Carrier Associates and Assistant Rural Carriers on the Garden Isle. The positions, which offer \$19.06/hour as starting pay, will be located at the Kalaheo, Kapaa, Kilauea, Koloa and Lihue Post Offices. Interested applicants should register in advance, by calling 808-423-6071. Walk-in applicants will be accepted based upon space availability. Those unable to attend the job fairs can apply online at www.usps.com/careers.

Governor David Ige has nominated five to serve on the State Board of Land and Natural Resources. One of the five is Karen Ono of Kauai who was nominated to represent our island. Ono was the Association Executive for the Kauai Board of Realtors until last year and holds an associate degree from Kauai Community College.

Kauaʻi District Health Office announced 64 new cases of COVID-19 today, Thursday, Feb. 17. Today's cases bring the number of active cases to 153, with five hospitalized, and 11,648 cumulative cases. . There are a total of 24 Kauaʻi COVID fatalities to date.

Hawaii Department of Health officials today reported 16 new coronavirus-related deaths and 650 new confirmed and probable infections statewide, bringing the state's totals since the start of the pandemic to 1,290 fatalities and 233,155 cases.

A man accused of beating a woman to death outside the Kapolei Police Station on Tuesday night had been arrested the day before. The man had just been released from a cellblock, in that police station, and attacked the apparent stranger after walking out. The 48-year-old woman was beaten just a few feet away from the front doors of the police station. The man was arrested on suspicion of assaulting a police officer on Monday night, after allegedly assaulting a worker at a halfway house moments before. He was allowed to walk free after the city prosecutor's office decided not to press charges.

The passing of a new bill would give Hawaii's licensed doctors and nurses a ten-thousand-dollar income tax credit. Hawaii Nurses Association President Daniel Ross believes this could mitigate the state's nursing shortage by giving nurses a good incentive to stay on the islands. He believes it could also attract more healthcare workers to the state, but says employers also need to pick up the slack and pay their workers more competitive salaries. The bill needs to pass one more reading and hearing in the House before the Senate can consider it.

Oahu's condominium owners want more time to comply with fire safety codes. A law, passed by the Honolulu City Council in 2018, requires condos have fire sprinklers or pass a life-safety evaluation test. The law was passed after the deadly Marco Polo Building fire and affects nearly 39-thousand units across 323 properties. Condos without plans to install sprinklers have until spring of 2024 to pass the life-safety evaluation. So far, only a dozen of 178 buildings required to undergo the evaluation have actually done it and passed. Yesterday, condo owners met and argued there's been inconsistencies in

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how the evaluation is conducted at different buildings. They claim some rules and regulations are left up to the inspector's interpretation, and are not uniform for all properties.

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Local Kaua'i News – Friday February 18, 2022

Kaua'i District Health Office announced two fatalities and 39 new cases of COVID-19 on Friday, Feb. 18. One fatality was a male resident in his 60s who was hospitalized. The second fatality was a female resident in her 70s who was hospitalized. Kaua'i has a total of 26 COVID fatalities to date. Today's cases bring the number of active cases to 147, with 3 hospitalized, and 11,687 cumulative cases

Health officials are confirming 485 new COVID cases on Hawaii today. There were also two virus-related deaths reported, raising the state's death toll to one-thousand-292. Of the new cases, most were found Oahu. Over the past 14 days, eight-thousand-641 coronavirus infections have been reported by the state.

The Department of Health has confirmed 29 more cases of the Omicron BA.2 coronavirus variant. That's a relatively new mutation of the Omicron variant, first detected on the islands last month. The BA.2 mutation has been discovered in more than 70 countries, and is tied with significant case increases in some places like Denmark.

The University of Hawaii is no longer planning to require students and staff members take COVID booster shots to attend on-campus classes. Instead, the current policy that requires students and staff members be fully vaccinated will stay in place through this fall. U.H. President David Lassner made the announcement yesterday, in his monthly report to the Board of Regents. He also reported record graduation and retention rates across the ten-campus system for this academic year.

Congress has passed a bill that includes 100-million-dollars in funding for draining the Navy's fuel tanks at Red Hill. Now it just needs President Biden's signature to become a law. The bill, written by Hawaii Senator Brian Schatz, also directs the Department of Defense to follow the state's emergency public health order related to Red Hill. In total, the bill includes 400-million-dollars to address the water contamination crisis, 100-million of which would be dedicated to removing the World War Two-era fuel tanks.

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

Local Kaua'i News – Tuesday February 22, 2022

The Navy's Pacific Missile Range Facility on Kauai is responding to an aircraft incident near the north side of the installation, according to spokesman Thomas Clements. Pacific Missile Range Facility emergency personnel responded to the crash of a civilian contracted helicopter on the northern area of the installation shortly after 10 a.m. today. The helicopter was flying in support of a training operation, officials said. Information regarding the occupants will be released once available. An investigation will commence to determine the cause of the accident.

Kaua'i District Health Office announced 10 new cases of COVID-19 today, Tuesday, Feb. 22. Today's cases bring the number of active cases to 95, with five hospitalized, and 11,764 cumulative cases. Kaua'i has had a total of 26 COVID fatalities to date. The Department of Health is reporting 150 new COVID cases today. There were no new deaths, keeping the state death toll at one-thousand-304. Over the last 14 days there's been six-thousand-306 new coronavirus cases.

State lawmakers are mulling over a bill that would ban chronic criminals from coming back to Waikiki and other resort areas. The push for change follows a violent and crime-ridden past several months in Waikiki that included an arson that destroyed hundreds of surfboards, and an attack that left a tourist dead on the beach. If the bill is passed, anyone convicted of four misdemeanors in the same business district or resort area would be banned from coming back. It's unclear how long their ban would last.

A Hawaii Senator is touring the Red Hill underground fuel facility today. Senator Mazie Hirono will visit the facility first before meeting with business owners who were affected by the water crisis at the Navy Exchange. Senator Hirono is part of the Senate Armed Services Committee and has military oversight. Hirono's action comes after President Biden signed a bill to drain the fuel tanks. However, the Pentagon challenged the defueling order saying it needs more time to figure out a long-term solution.

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Local Kauaʻi News
2022 - Quarter 1 – February**

Local Kauaʻi News – Wednesday February 23, 2022

NTSB and FAA teams are on their way to Kauai as the investigation into a military-contracted helicopter crash at the Pacific Missile Range Facility gets underway. The helicopter crash happened about 10 a.m. Tuesday morning near the north side of the installation. Officials are identifying the four crew members who were killed when the military-contracted helicopter crashed. A spokesperson for Croman Corporation confirmed the four people who died were employees of the company. The late crew members include: 64-year-old Pilot Examiner Daniel Maurice, 55-year-old Airman Patrick Rader; and two Mechanic and Aircrew employees: 42-year-old Ericka Tevez-Valdez and 44-year-old Mathew Haider. Maurice's home residence was in Lyle, Washington. The other three victims were Kauai residents.

Health Kauaʻi District Health Office announced 12 new cases of COVID-19 on Wednesday, Feb. 23. Today's cases bring the number of active cases to 67, with six hospitalized, and 11,776 cumulative cases. Kauaʻi has had a total of 26 COVID fatalities to date. The state of Hawaii Department of Health reported 134 new coronavirus infections statewide on Wednesday.

Draining the Navy's Red Hill fuel tanks will be an expensive undertaking. Senator Mazie Hirono toured the facility yesterday. On Friday, President Biden signed a bill into law that includes 100-million-dollars needed to drain the tanks. But, Hirono says that's just the start of the money that's needed. Congress is asking for 500-million-dollars for further cleanup efforts and Hirono says she's fighting to secure more funding. She also wants an agreement with official language that says the Navy can't refuel the tanks in the future without first securing a state permit.

The U.S. Navy expects 27 countries to partake in this summer's Rim of the Pacific Exercise. Forty-two ships, five submarines, at least 170 aircraft, and 25-thousand military personnel are estimated to be at RIMPAC, which will be held in the waters off Hawaii and San Diego.

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Local Kaua'i News
2022 - Quarter 1 – February

Local Kaua'i News – Friday February 25, 2022

Due to the High Surf Warning and hazardous ocean conditions, the Ocean Safety Bureau is advising no swimming at North Shore beaches from Anini Beach to Kee Beach. The National Weather Service (NWS) issued a High Surf Warning for all north- and west-facing shores of Kaua'i and Ni'ihau in effect through 6 p.m. Feb. 26.

Kaua'i District Health Office announced 28 new cases of COVID-19 today Friday, Feb. 25. Today's cases bring the number of active cases to 69, with five hospitalized, and 11,823 cumulative cases. Kaua'i has a total of 27 COVID fatalities to date. The State of Hawaii Department of Health (DOH) reports 311 new coronavirus cases and 9 new deaths today. The state death toll rose to 1,321.

Some Children sickened by jet fuel on military reservations are still suffering from symptoms. The Navy says the kids were only temporarily exposed to petroleum when the Red Hill water crisis started last year. But, families say they have proof something is still seriously wrong. . Impacted families are now banding together, demanding compensation from the military, and demanding long-term medical care for their children.

Those on the fence about running for office on the islands now have more time to make up their minds. The candidate filing period, which was supposed to open next week, is now on hold with no start date announced. It's because of a lawsuit challenging the legality of the state's new voting maps. Eleven residents argue the Reapportionment Commission looked past the public's suggestions to keep districts grouped together, as recommended by the constitution. The group filing the suit wants the maps redrawn. The state Supreme Court is giving state officials until March 3rd to respond to the lawsuit.

Hawaii football legend Colt Brennan showed significant signs of CTE before he died last May. Doctors believe the quarterback had a degenerative brain disease caused by repeated blows to the head. In addition to football, Brennan also suffered a traumatic brain injury in a car crash on the Big Island in 2010. Doctors say the ongoing and worsening brain issues hurt Brennan's abilities to make decisions, process emotions, and stop destructive impulses. Four drugs, including fentanyl, were found in Brennan's system when he died in California, where he was staying for rehab treatment.

Tourists visiting Hawaii might soon have to pay a "climate change mitigation impact fee" when they rent a car. The fee would kick in July 1st. The amount has not yet been decided. Proponents of the state Senate bill proposing the fee say it would offset tourists' effect on climate change. The fee would also apply to large vehicles like buses and vans used for sightseeing trips.

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Local Kauaʻi News
2022 - Quarter 1 – February

Local Kauaʻi News – Monday February 28, 2022

Our Kauaʻi District Health Office announced 23 new cases of COVID-19 today, Monday, Feb. 28. Today's cases bring the number of active cases on our island to 83, with four hospitalized, and 11,874 cumulative cases.. Kauaʻi has a total of 27 COVID fatalities to date. Meanwhile, The Hawaii State Department of Health Hawaii (DOH) reported no new deaths statewide related to COVID-19 and 142 new infections on Monday. The total number of deaths in Hawaii stands at 1,334.

Despite ongoing flushing efforts, there's still high levels of petroleum, lead and other harmful compounds in Oahu's tap water. During the weekend, the Navy released another series of water test results. Testing found high levels of contaminants in the water at an elementary school, a child development center, military housing communities, and on Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam. A water sample taken at the Pier Side Child Development Center contains lead at 49 parts per billion. The state limit is 15 parts per billion. Most residents and business owners in the Pearl Harbor area are still advised to lay off their tap water.

Hawaii is in the middle of another rental car shortage. And, as demand goes up with spring break on the horizon, so do prices. Some rental rates have tripled, especially with visitor arrival numbers at more than double what they were last February. The Department of Transportation says back when the pandemic started, many rental car companies sold off a chunk of their fleets, or left a lot of their cars parked outside Aloha Stadium. The hot sun caused issues on those parked cars that still haven't been fixed. Rental car companies are having trouble rebuilding their fleets because of an ongoing, worldwide semiconductor chip shortage affecting manufacturing.

No disruptions to Hawaii's crude oil supply are expected despite the war between Russia and Ukraine. Last year, about a quarter of Hawaii's crude oil came from the Russian Far East. Officials with Facts Global Energy in Honolulu, the state's only refinery, don't expect the conflict to create supply shortages in Hawaii. But, prices are expected to continue suffering as a result. The managing director of Facts Global Energy expects oil prices to increase by 20 to 60-cents in Hawaii, with the biggest price jump coming this summer.

No injuries are reported after a home on Oahu's North Shore collapsed onto the beach. Honolulu Fire Department crews responded to the Haleiwa home on Ke Nui Road after receiving a 9-1-1 call about a downed power line. When HFD crews arrived on the scene around 1:30 a.m. the house had partially collapsed onto the beach. No one was inside the home at the time.