During the legislature’s interim, my duties serving as Chair of the Senate Committee on Transportation and International Affairs requires a great deal of travel. Since our last issue I have traveled to Palau for the Association of Pacific Island Legislatures General Assembly. I then began a week long trek across Canada, beginning in Ottawa, through Manitoba, Saskatchewan, British Columbia, Yukon and concluding in Alberta. There I attended the Embassy of Canada’s 2011 Rising State Leaders program. In late July I traveled on to Pohnpei, where I attended the Federated States of Micronesia’s inauguration ceremony for their new governmental leadership.

In this issue, we feature highlights from these destinations in addition to showcasing some of the numerous organizations I serve and meetings that I attend. As always, my office remains open during the interim, ready to assist you.

As Chairman of the Hawai’i State Senate Committee on Transportation and International Affairs, Senator English was invited to attend the Joint Inauguration Celebration for the new Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) Government Leadership in Pohnpei. Senator English joined with delegations from countries across the world in welcoming this new leadership to the Federated States of Micronesia. This celebration enabled the FSM government to showcase their culture and arts to the world.

While in Pohnpei, Senator English attended numerous receptions and services in addition to meeting with U.S. Ambassador Peter Prahar to discuss the region. “It’s an honor for me to be invited by our many brothers and sisters across the Pacific to attend such prestigious events,” said Senator English, “We are so fortunate that we can reach out to each other in both times of need and joy.”

Senator English presents a feather lei to His Excellency Manny Mori, President of the Federated States of Micronesia. July 28, 2011.

The official United States Delegation to the Federated States of Micronesia meets with His Excellency President Manny Mori at his office in Palikir, Pohnpei. FSM, July 28, 2011.
Formed in 1981, the Association of Pacific Island Legislatures (APIL) is comprised of legislative representatives from 12 island governments: American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, Island of Guam, FSM State of Chuuk, FSM State of Kosrae, FSM State of Pohnpei, FSM State of Yap, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Republic of Palau, the State of Hawai‘i, Republic of Nauru and the Republic of Kiribati. Senator English has served as the Hawai‘i State Senate delegate for the last five years and has just relinquished the APIL Presidency after reaching the two term limit.

Members of APIL meet biannually to consider matters in areas where regional cooperation, coordination, exchange and assistance may help governments achieve their goals through collective action. As representatives of these Pacific island peoples, APIL members have joined together in an association structured with sufficient capability and permanence to address, in depth, the substantive regional and international issues facing the emerging Pacific governments. These issues may include, but are not limited to, those arising in the areas of Resources and Economic Development, Commerce, Legislation, Energy, Regional Security and Defense, Communications, Cultural Appreciation, Health and Social Services, Education, Agriculture, Air and Sea Transportation, Aquaculture, Sports and Recreation, Youth and Senior Citizens, Tourism, Finance, Political Status, External Relations, and Development Banking.

At the 2011 General Assembly, held in the Republic of Palau, 22 resolutions were passed on various issues ranging from shark finning prohibitions, behavioral health issues (i.e. alcohol abuse, tobacco consumption, illicit drug use) and migratory fish declines. For more information see: http://apilpacific.com/currentissues.php

Senator J. Kalani English joined various State Legislators and Governor Neil Abercrombie at Washington Place for the signing of Senate Bill 1520 into law. Senate Bill 1520 formally recognizes Native Hawaiian people as the only indigenous people of Hawai‘i, and is a historic step in the reconciliation process mending relations between the State of Hawai‘i and the Native Hawaiian people.

The purpose and effect of the bill is to provide for and enact the formal recognition by the State of Hawai‘i of the Native Hawaiian people as, “The only indigenous, aboriginal, maoli people of Hawai‘i” as well as “implement that recognition by means and methods that will facilitate their self-governance, including the establishment of or the amendment to, programs, entities and other matters that relate, or affect ownership, possession, or use of lands by the Native Hawaiian people and by further promoting their entitlements, health, education, welfare, heritage and culture.”

Senate Bill 1520, now Act 195, acknowledges the present reality of native Hawaiians and urges the process forward. It is intended to move in concert with the efforts by U.S. Senator Daniel Akaka and the Congressional Delegation of Hawai‘i to achieve federal recognition of Native Hawaiians. About 20 other States have taken action to recognize the entities (i.e. tribes, bands, clans, pueblos, etc.) organized by native people within their borders. A number of State recognized native entities have gone on to receive federal recognition.

Senator English enjoys the bounty of Makawao’s ever growing Farmers market. Maui, July 2, 2011.

Senator English congratulates Sean McLaughlin, former CEO of Akaku for his outstanding contributions to public TV in Maui County. Kahului, Maui. July 8, 2011.

Senator J. Kalani English attends the Obon dance in Paia. Maui, 8 July 2011.

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Sen. English was recently invited by the Government of Canada to participate in the Embassy of Canada’s 2011 Rising State Leaders program. Now in its sixth year, the program has hosted 38 participants (primarily state legislators) from 24 U.S. states. Applications are not accepted for the program; candidates are nominated and selected by the Canadian Embassy and Canadian Consulates General.

This educational working tour of Canada provided participants the opportunity to meet with political counterparts, business leaders and cultural representatives on a wide range of key issues including: border security and defense, energy, environment, agriculture, trade cooperation and promotion.

The 2011 program focused on Western Canada, beginning in Ottawa and traveling to Manitoba, Saskatchewan, British Columbia, Yukon and Alberta. In coordination with provincial partners, the program is built to foster relationships with U.S. leaders at the state level while providing selected candidates with a deeper understanding of the remarkable U.S.-Canada relationship.

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Senators J. Kalani English and Anders Blewett, Leah Davis from the Embassy of Canada, Senator Laura Kelly and Representative Paul Agnew at the smallest desert in the world, Carcross desert in Yukon, Canada. June 25, 2011.