



MidWeek

This column by Senator Michelle Kidani
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Are You Ready?

While it is hard to admit that anything good came out of last month's false missile attack alert, the incident brought home most vividly just how unprepared we are for such a catastrophic event. Now that the alert system deficiencies have been identified and are being remedied, our attention should focus on emergency preparedness. While a such an attack is highly unlikely, the state's response plans do include numerous scenarios based on significant numbers of survivors. And that is why preparing for an emergency – and the aftermath – is so important.

A Town Hall meeting has been scheduled for next week – Tuesday, February 27, at Mililani Middle School cafeteria beginning at 7 pm – to hear presentations about how best to prepare. The Hawaii Emergency Management Agency (HI-EMA) will be there, as will the Department of Education. So many questions have been asked about how our school-aged children would be protected if an attack were to occur during school hours and parents or grandparents were unable to connect with these youngsters. I expect that the DOE's presentation will be of special importance.

I am pleased to co-sponsor this important Town Hall forum with my Mililani colleague, Senator Donovan Dela Cruz. I cannot stress enough how important this is – for our families and our communities – and I urge you to make time to attend.

By the way, I submitted a bill this session – Senate Bill 2918 – that would prohibit HI-EMA from issuing an alert without receiving prior approval for such an alert from the U.S. Pacific Military Command. At the bill's first hearing, Brig. General Moses Kaiwi, the agency's interim director, testified that these procedures are now in effect, which is reassuring for all of us.

I have also introduced two resolutions relating to this matter. One (SCR 23) would request that the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) require TV stations that broadcast in Hawaii to dedicate time to public service announcements so that HI-EMA can get their message to all of our residents regarding emergency preparedness. The second (SCR 26) would request the FCC to require that all cell phones be equipped to receive emergency alerts with no means of "opting out" of receiving such alerts. You can follow the progress of these measures at the Legislature's website: capitol.hawaii.gov.



Fresh and fabulous – the new school lunch

Mililani High School has been chosen as the next campus for the 'Aina Pono Farm to School initiative that aims to improve the quality of school lunches by using fresh foods from local farms and producers. Farm to School was introduced as a pilot program at schools in Kohala on Hawaii Island that I visited last year, and Mililani is a great choice for next phase expansion.

I was so excited to visit with MHS students and cafeteria staff earlier this month as the plan was previewed. Their kitchen prepares 1,500 lunches a day for Mililani High students and also

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supplies another 1,500 meals for Mililani Uka and Mililani Waena elementary schools. Chef Greg Christian, from Beyond Green Sustainable Food Partners, laid out a wonderful assortment of fresh fruits, vegetables and local-beef hamburgers that we all enthusiastically enjoyed!



Lt. Governor Doug Chin and I sat down with Mililani students to sample a new Farm to school sample menu.



The DOE and the Department of Agriculture are working with Chef Greg Christian on meal and menu planning.

The goal, of course, is to offer students fresher, healthier lunch menus, as well as support our local economy and work toward sustainability as we support farmers and producers along the way. Ultimately, I think it would be terrific if Mililani were set up as a central location training facility to introduce other DOE cafeteria managers to Farm to School.

Mahalo to everyone who has worked hard to make this program a success!