



MidWeek

This column by Senator Michelle Kidani was published in the MidWeek **CENTRAL VOICE** section on Wednesday, December 19, 2018.

Legislative session on the horizon

In just a month, the 2019 session of the Legislature will convene at the State Capitol. I will again be Senate Vice President, Chair of the critically important Committee on Education, and will serve as Vice Chair of the Higher Education Committee and as a member of the Committee on Ways and Means – the Senate budget committee – led by my colleague, Mililani/Wahiawa Senator Donovan Dela Cruz.

The coming session will focus on formulating a state spending plan for the two-year period that begins on July 1, 2019. Over the last several months, we have been visiting several state agencies and reviewing the effectiveness of their programs. In the next few weeks we will be conducting hearings on specific budget proposals leading up to our official start of business. Our legislative calendar includes 60 session days that extend to the first week of May. On days we are not in session we are still committed to hold committee hearings.



You are invited!

All Hawaii residents are welcome at the Capitol any time, of course, but our first day of business is a special opportunity to visit and personally meet legislators and staff. Please join us on ***Wednesday, January 16***, for the formal session at 10 a.m., followed by informal visits to various offices. My office is in room 228 on the Ewa side of the second floor. I look forward to seeing you!

New facilities now open for business

In just the last three weeks, we have celebrated the completion and grand opening of three important projects. The noticeable improvements to the **Kipapa Stream (Roosevelt) Bridge** along Kamehameha Highway are now finished. The project was funded 80 percent by the federal government, supplemented by the State of Hawaii. While not all the community is happy with the new traffic lane configuration, the bridge now meets current safety/structural standards for the heavy traffic that crosses this vital link between our Waialeale, Waipio and Mililani neighborhoods.



The rehabilitated Kipapa Stream (Roosevelt) Bridge has new pavement and is now wider with 7-foot shoulders in both directions making it safer for all users.

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Along Kam Highway, the new Waipio EMS ambulance station was dedicated last week. Emergency Medical Services are operated by the City & County of Honolulu, with funding provided by the State Department of Health. This is a project I initiated a decade ago when I was first elected to the Senate, and we are all pleased that the city has finally completed their work.



I joined Mayor Caldwell and City Council member Ron Menor (at left) at the official dedication for the long awaited Waipio EMS station.



EMS personnel provide critical services to our many neighboring communities—thank you for your service!

(Photos from EMS)

I also attended the grand opening for the newest building at the University of Hawaii West Oahu campus last week. UH West Oahu has been the fastest growing school of its type in the nation for the past two years according to the Chronicle of Higher Education’s annual almanac. This campus is the higher education home to a significant number of students from Mililani and neighboring central Oahu communities. It will provide much-needed classrooms and laboratories for students planning careers in the allied health services professions and will also allow administrative offices to move “home” from temporary off-campus space.



The UH West Oahu campus ‘skyline’ is changing as enrollment continues to grow and new academic programs are added.

Happy holidays!

As 2018 comes to a close, please accept my best wishes for a happy and healthy year-end holiday season. Along with opportunities for fellowship among family and friends, the start of a new year is a time to count blessings and commit to even better days ahead. For those who are able, please consider ways you can contribute to stronger communities to the benefit of all of us.

Mele Kalikimaka me ka Hau`oli Makahiki Hou!

