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Talking telecom
Mariana Islands upgrades

▶ PAGES 19 & 23



Fishing for business
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20 YEAR ANNIVERSARY
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From farm to fork
Industry in growth mode

BY MAUREEN N. MARATITA
Journal Staff

There's now a focus on food and farming and renewed interest in Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands in being part of the industry, whether for business or as a consumer.



Muna

That's the result of several factors: more attention to diet, cooking at home during the pandemic, supply chain disruption and rising costs.

Guam has 578 farmers registered with the Guam Department of Agriculture.

Chelsa D. Muna was appointed director in 2019, and since then the department has re-organized its database, removing people who passed on, or were no longer farming. "It made it data we could start using," she said.

Of the number of farmers she said, "I would estimate 150 to 160 of them are commercial." The type of farmers in Guam is wide-ranging. "We have subsistence farmers that are farming on a quarter of an acre or less," she said. Livestock ranchers can also be designated commercial or subsistence farmers. Some subsistence farmers are rearing their own pigs, chicken and cattle for consumption. "There's even a segment for deer if they choose to raise the deer that they capture in the wild and start breeding them," Muna said. "I encountered two people that

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Jailhouse will rock
Upgraded prison to be built on Guam

BY ALTHEA ENGMAN
Journal Staff

The Guam Department of Public Works has put out a Request for Proposal for the design of a new correctional facility on Guam.

The RFP sought out qualified architectural and engineering firm services for the Guam Department of Corrections, which will be built in four phases. The new correctional facility is estimated to be completed by the 2035 time frame.

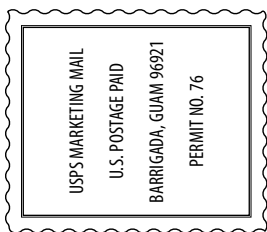
RFPs are now due on Nov 15, a deadline that was extended from the original due date of Sept. 11 to Oct. 11, and then to Oct 26 after Tropical Storm Bolaven.

The new design is to be built in phases to allow for continued operation of the existing facility as a new one is being built, according to Journal sources.

The first phase will consist of a prison cell block that will house 480 total detainees. The second phase would add two cell blocks and 320 additional beds. The most expensive phase — phase 3, will house from 96 up to 144 maximum security inmates. Phase four will add an additional 160 beds.

The combined phases will result in a 1,000-bed correctional facility.

SEE UPGRADE ON PAGE 3



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At the Defense Leadership Forum at the Marriott Waikiki Beach from Oct. 17 to 19 were (from left) Jay R. Shedd, vice president of business development for Pacific Data Systems; Leonard K. Kaae Sr., senior vice president and general manager for Black Construction Corp.; Monty McDowell, CEO and principal broker for Advance Management Inc.; and Jesse Garcia, project manager, Black Construction.

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Feeling pulses, forging ahead and facing fear of the future

I realize that's not a very joyful headline on the top of the page. I hope it doesn't dampen your enthusiasm for the holidays.

In the weeks and days leading up to this column, the Glimpses Media teams have been out and about attending events, and meeting people. Me too. The last few months of the year always seem to have a flurry of activity, and this year is no different — parties, lunches, forums, and a slew of business openings and re-openings, all of which have featured in our news.

At cocktail parties and mixers, the talk is of our challenges. Well, yes, business successes, but the topic inevitably changes to challenges.

Workforce issues are very much on all our minds — whether you are a large or a small business and no matter the industry.

Many businesses are short on staff, and there is a lot of competition for potential employees. And of

course, if you're in the construction industry you can hardly keep up with the work, let alone the vexing issue of having enough H-2Bs, and a skilled workforce.

Aside from the vacancies online, on the usual employment sites, and business websites, there are the "We are hiring" banners fluttering in the wind around the island.

Then there are the job fairs. In case you think the act of sourcing employees is solely a local activity, employees don't have to leave their homes to find the latest company or group offering that's offering an on-line career fair from the U.S. mainland.

Another challenge is that the U.S. Department of Labor intends to raise the salary threshold of exempt employees by thousands through the Fair Labor Standards Act. In the islands, where we have yet to see our economies recover post-pandemic, that's not welcome

news, to put it mildly.

At the Journal, we hear of people moving off-island. There are all sorts of reasons. I spoke to a middle management executive at length one evening who was on the verge of leaving with his family. Dealing with mixed emotions (because Guam is truly a special place to live), Typhoon Mawar and the slow pace of our recovery was the deciding factor.

On a happier note, seasonal gift guides abound, to include "the best gifts for entrepreneurs and new business owners." While



PLAIN ENGLISH

Maureen N. Maratita

many of the ideas for this year focus on practicality (like food and beverages) and tech products, a custom blanket (in case your airline is not providing them) and other travel products are popular.

And as we forge ahead, I expect I will see a bunch of you on Jan. 13 at the Guam Business Magazine Executive of the Year gala at the Hyatt Regency Guam.

If you have a nomination, please send it in soon, as nominations close on Nov. 13. You can find a fillable form on www.guambusinessmagazine.com, or you can download the form if you prefer. **mbj**

— Maureen N. Maratita is the publisher at Glimpses Media. Publications at Glimpses Media include the Marianas Business Journal, MBJ Life, The Real Estate Journal, Guam Business Magazine, Beach Road Magazine, Buenas and Drive Guam.

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UPGRADE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

DPW's RFP report said the new prison design was validated by 'Benchmarking' trips to Fulton County Jail in Atlanta, Ga., Phoenix County Jail, Ariz., Franklin County Sheriff, Columbus, Ohio, and the Saginaw County Jail, Michigan Facilities.

According to the RFP, the current prison in Hagatna had a total population of less than 300, about 18 years ago. As of one year prior to COVID-19, it was at a high of about 700 detainees.

In the RFP project overview, DPW said that the "DOC master plan was developed once all the fact-finding efforts were completed. Some of the most important inputs were the SWOT analysis, population trends and projections, the inputs from medical, behavioral health, officers and various inspections of the facility and its key components. The fact-finding mission was most important to clearly understand where the prison had come from in the past and where it is currently positioned."

The last audit by the Office of Public Accountability in 2013 found that DOC did not follow standards, among other comments.

The new Department of Corrections can be classified as of significant size.

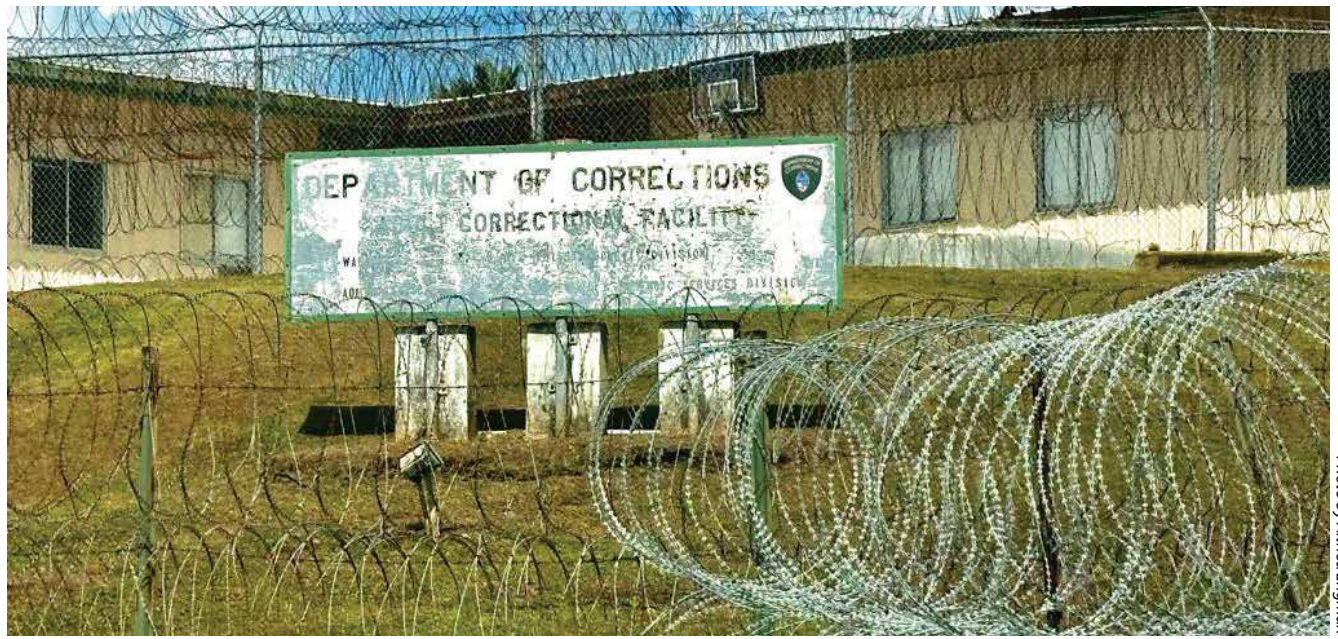


Photo by Althea Engman

The Department of Corrections in downtown Hagatna.

According to the American Jail Association, jails are categorized according to size. "Mega jails have a 1,000-plus bed capacity. Large jails have a 250- to 999-bed capacity. Medium jails have a 50- to 249-bed capacity. Small jails have a 1-to 49-bed capacity," the association said.

Depending on what a facility contains and construction materials, costs can vary enormously. The cost of building prisons in the U.S. has also grown.

The Guam community can expect inmates to have new medical, dental, and behavioral units, as

well as rehabilitation training, and housing for the seriously mentally ill amongst many fixtures.

In its own preparations, the state of Wisconsin found that "a single new 1,200-bed maximum security prison will cost approximately \$500 million," and that new housing units that can hold over 1,000 inmates at medium security institutions would cost more than \$100 million in construction costs each, according to the Mead/Hunt report from the Badger Institute.

Franklin County's jail cost about \$360 million.

One of the major issues the current facility faces is the open-air concept, especially with electric powered drones becoming more popular. Additionally, there are no safeguards "to stop officers and others from sneaking in contraband", the RFP said. There have also been instances of items being thrown over the fence.

With the proposed new designs, the facility hopes to resolve most of their issues as well as new safeguards to overcrowding, food delivery and meal service. **mbj**

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FARMING

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

are doing that.”

The percentage of agricultural land area in Guam was reported at 29.63 % in 2021, according to the World Bank. Farmers are based throughout the island and in areas you might not expect, Muna said.

Successful commercial farming exists in Guam. “I would say a few more than ten. They don’t become household names, but we see their products and don’t realize it,” Muna said. Farmers are of all ages, she said. “Some of them are even quite young. ... We have quite a few that are either in the agricultural program at [the University of Guam] or have graduated from that program.” Some of that group would already be working in the industry, Muna said. There are a lot of women that farm, she said.

Muna anticipates veteran’s associations and veterans turning to farming. “UOG had their new farmer veteran initiative and I know there are various non-profits exploring that as well,” she said.

Registration with the department comes with benefits: a Business Privilege Tax Exemption Certificate for any kind of farmer. The addition of the subsistence exemption was Muna’s initiative. Farmers do not have business licenses but are required to file a financial report every six months.

Michelle Crisostomo, president and co-founder of Guåhan Sustainable Culture, said, “This is something we’ve been trying to bring awareness to farmers about, because there’s a lot of confusion about what farmers need to do about record keeping and taxes.”

Subsistence farmers growing produce for their own or family consumption are not restricted by size of land but were. Muna also waived the restriction, so people could grow on smaller plots.

Guåhan Sustainable’s mission includes “greater food sovereignty and greater food security,” as well as people’s own proficient cultivation of food.”

Hiring personnel for the Agriculture Development Services division, where there had been no hiring since the 1990s, was another of Muna’s aims. “We picked people that we needed to support the program and to actually start supporting programs for the farmers.”

DOAg has also worked with UOG to develop farming programs suitable for Chamorro Land Trust Commission tenants who have farmland. “There are training programs that we’d like to present to those that are non-compliant to help them learn how to farm,” she said. Some of the land is difficult to farm, she said, requiring background knowledge. UOG also has a livestock specialist.

U . S . Department of Agriculture funding is available, administered in Guam. “We have the micro grant for security program. We’re in our third cycle of that; we’ve already awarded close to half a million dollars,” Muna said. “In hiring personnel we’ve gone after a lot more funding.” The program offers \$5,000 per award on one-year projects, including building greenhouses and gardens, and fencing property to protect crops.

The department is also supporting groups like Farm to Table Guam Corp., Guåhan Sustainable Culture and the Farmers’ Cooperative Association of Guam. “There are different segments of USDA for which you can apply for grant funding,” she said. These include agriculture marketing services, and USDA’s National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

Guahan Sustainable and the department work closely together on initiatives, she said.

Crisostomo is the main coordinator of the DOAg’s Farm to Family Program, supported by DOAg’s USDA Local Food Purchase funding and launched Oct. 3. She said, “It’s a partnership.” The program is aimed at people in need, and distributes produce purchased from farmers by the Farmer’s Cooperative through a food bank on Tuesdays and Thursdays, also working with non-profits and mayors, rotating those weekly, and directly with people in need who call. “That money goes directly to purchasing the produce,” Crisostomo said. Guahan Sustainable packs the varied produce. Any extra produce is freely distributed, she said. “Word is getting out,” she said.

A Qualifying Certificate Community Contribution grant from the Guam Economic Development Authority of \$20,000 supported a Poultry Development Project. “We got 20 potential farmers come in, apply and then we did a workshop series, and the funding from GEDA was used to start their first small poultry farm,” Crisostomo said. Farmers were given a coop, seed for six months, training and poultry welfare guidance and egg safety training. ERC Hardware Express helped with designing the coops, and the feed stores were supportive, she said. A separate workshop on breeding and incubating provided training, incubators and a rooster. “To this day we still work with at least four of those farmers,” Crisostomo said. Some of the poultry farmers sell eggs to Guahan Sustainable. “People can come in here any day of the week and buy fresh eggs now or order online,” she said.



Crisostomo



Photo courtesy of the Taiwan Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Lt. Gov. Joshua F. Tenorio visited Farmers’ Association of Taoyuan City facilities in 2022.

The Guahan Sustainable office in the Chamorro Village in Hagatna is for planning and for its staff, but does sell local produce and more at Wednesday’s night markets. “We’ve been selling a lot of seedlings lately,” Crisostomo said. “We do a lot of education programs; I think that’s one of the biggest activities that we have,” she said.

The organization needed a business plan to move into the Chamorro Village and met with Guam’s Small Business Development Center to develop that. Overheads such as rent and the eight staff are largely paid through various grant programs. There are two full-time employees, and two paid through AmeriCorps.

Guahan Sustainable has a Farm to School after school and summer school youth program, funded by the USDA that helps to incorporate farming and agriculture into education, Crisostomo says, to teach them nutrition and the importance of eating fresh local food.

She says a lot of the farmers looking to enter the industry are younger, and Guahan Sustainable targets that demographic.

Crisostomo said Guahan Sustainable became a partner for the USDA’s Remote Islands Regional Business Center, through the Hawaii Good Food Alliance. Locations included Guam and the NMI. “The idea is it’s a five-year plan to develop a regional food business center and to help develop our agriculture but to increase mainly the capacity of our farmers and food producers in our region,” she said. The undertaking and workshops began with a Sept. 28 meeting. “All the different organizations came together to plan.” That included entities like the Department of Agriculture, the Guam Economic Development Agency, the USDA in Guam and the University of Guam, as well as private sector companies like Sodexo Inc. Guam, and Payless Markets. Funding covers technical assistance and the

opportunity for training, Crisostomo said. “The big thing is that there’s going to be business builder grants coming up in years Two to Five that will go directly to farmers and food producers to help build their capacity.” The current year is for planning, and getting stakeholder input. Challenges include a labor supply, the expenses associated with farming, and competing with some cheaper imports. “Land is also a challenge for new farmers. ... Invasive species is a big problem,” she said.

“We plan to meet three more times with these groups to identify what the needs are,” she said.

Guahan Sustainable also held the first meetings in Saipan for the NMI on Sept. 28, in coordination with the Kagman Agricultural Producers and Farmers Association and will hold more meetings there before plans for both areas are submitted. “It’s an older generation of farmers ... they’ve only recently become an official organization,” she said. Representative from the Northern Marianas College Cooperative Research, Extension and Education Services also attended, she said.

Possibly Guahan Sustainable will visit Tinian and Rota on upcoming visits to the NMI. The grant covers farmers with livestock as well as crops, she said, and input from all islands can be included, she said.

Crisostomo also met with a new group of younger farmers and educators, the Marianas Producers Association, she said. Issues in Saipan included irrigation, labor, and the distribution and sale of produce, although there is a Farmers Market on the island, she said.

People in agriculture or farming can be highly committed. After spending ten years studying agriculture, Muna said the department was the only place she wanted to work.

Her “personal mission is to have



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FARMING

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

thousands of little farms around our island and thousands of little regenerative farms where we utilize technology that promotes the use of indigenous knowledge ...of how we used to raise crops and trees and animals." The approach allows larger trees to provide protection for smaller trees, which provide protection for the smaller crops, and lend themselves to commercialization, she said. Regenerative agriculture is already used for irrigation in Guam, with funding from the USDA's Natural Resource Conservation Services potentially available, she said.

Generally, Muna said, "The challenge has been teaching people how to apply for funding. ... Groups like Guahan Sustainable have taken it upon themselves to find training opportunities to help them ... provide that technical assistance to farmers," she said. The department is working with Guahan Sustainable through grants each has related to training and distribution infrastructure.

Other people are interested in cooperative arrangements that allow sharing of equipment for raising chickens and growing coconuts, she said, or bulk purchase of expensive items like livestock feed.

Muna said such diversification includes what is grown, and there is now a project exploring the growth



Photo courtesy of Guahan Sustainable Culture

Guahan Sustainable Culture met with farmers in Saipan on Sept. 28.

of high value black peppers. "There are naysayers who say, 'You can't grow blueberries here; you can't grow strawberries here,' but we used to grow rice, we used to grow tobacco, we used to grow peppers. There are a tremendous amount of things you can grow here."

Typhoons and storms bring their own challenges to the Mariana Islands, but USDA's NRCS has an Environmental Quality Incentives Program, or EQIP, which could finance construction for greenhouses weather resistant equipment. "Some of that has gotten much stronger. ... If we're dealing with a Category 1 or a

Category 2 storm, sometimes they're survivable," Muna said.

Public Law 37-19 appropriated \$2 million to DOAg to fund the Crop Loss Compensation Program for Guam farmers, after Typhoon Mawar hit Guam in October. Guahan Sustainable raised from the community and off-island sources about \$50,000 for farmers, and distributed micro grants whatever the type of farming. Crisostomo said, "We got about 150 registered with us. We do keep in touch and send them information whenever there's programs for them."

The department has also met

with the Taiwan Economic and Cultural Office Guam and thinks there is potential in a relationship with Taiwan, despite U.S. political restrictions. The department worked directly with TECO to bring Taiwanese veterinary students to Guam for a spay and neuter program for animals. See "Building bridges," in the Oct. 2 Journal at www.mbjguam.com.

As a member of the U.S. National Lieutenant Governors Association's delegation to Taiwan in November 2022, Lt. Governor Joshua F. Tenorio visited the farm and farming facilities

SEE **FARMING** ON PAGE 17

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EDITORIAL

Winds of change

In our coverage of the latest developments, the stories in this paper cover a variety of updates on industry sectors, and the latest developments.

The telecommunications industry in our region of Micronesia is always in a state of change, from products to strengthening of infrastructure to availability.

Concerns impact the industry for its consumers conducting day-to-day business, particularly in a region beset by typhoons and storms, as witnessed after Typhoon Mawar in May and Typhoon Bolaven in October.

In the Mariana Islands, our telecom players are reviewing local government plans in Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands for the huge amounts of government grants for developing infrastructure and access. Industry businesses will have an opportunity to voice their opinions on plans.

We expect to continue to cover the industry's progress as the U.S. The Broadband Equity and Access Deployment program and the U.S. Digital Equity Act deadlines come into effect.

The Journal has also brought you news of how geopolitical events impact us a regional level.

We have written about radar installations in Palau since 2017. The latest "over the horizon radar being installed in that country to provide enhanced air domain awareness, is just one example of how the U.S. military is funding assets in the islands.

Small businesses are stepping forward to open throughout the islands, despite a less than favorable tourism climate.

In the Marshall Islands, companies are taking advantage of an insatiable demand for tuna in one of the largest retailers in the U.S. mainland.

And farming is seeing not only an influx of funding to support development, but a change in attitude to the industry from potential farmers.

Food security and resilience was heightened during the COVID-19 pandemic as supply chain issues came to the fore throughout the islands.

While our suppliers, our retailers and the transportation industry have worked their hardest to ensure the influx of goods we need, home grown produce and its distribution are seeing development.

The winds of change are blowing through the islands. **mbj**

COMMENTARY

Lawsuits could disrupt real estate commissions

BY CHRISTOPHER K. FELIX

There are currently a number of lawsuits from some real estate sellers against the National Association of Realtors, claiming that brokers and agencies have been overcharging their fees or commissions on the sales of real estate. To understand this lawsuit and what is happening, you first need to understand the laws of agency and the changes that have happened over the past 30 years in these laws and representation, and to further understand this lawsuit, we need to go back 40 to 50 years on how the laws of agency have changed.

When I got into selling real estate in Guam over 50 years ago, things were very simple. Real estate agents worked for the seller in almost all of the cases. This means that when the seller listed the property with a real estate firm, he agreed to pay a commission, which was usually a percentage of the selling price. That firm was the listing firm. The listing firm then offered other firms information on the property for sale and agreed to split the commission with the firm whose agent that brought the buyer to the transaction — the buyer's agent. Both agents worked for the seller with the buyer's agent being the sub-agent of the seller. So things were simple — we worked for the person (usually the seller) who paid us the commission, whether we were the listing agent or the buyer's agent.

However, since then things have changed a lot. Some buyers started getting upset that their agent was not representing them, but rather representing the seller. They could not get all the answers they wanted and could not share with their agent information in confidence, like the highest price they were willing to offer, so after a number of lawsuits and changes in agency laws, real estate agents became either a seller's agent, a buyer's agent or represented both based on who they were working with. Regardless, the commission was still normally paid by the seller and split in some percentage between the seller's and buyer's agent. This shift took over 30 years to happen, but that is basically how representations and agencies are now.

Today, some sellers have resented having to pay for the buyer's agent's fees/commissions. Thus, some of them have filed lawsuits against NAR and their real estate firms demanding they pay back the buyer's share of the commission they paid. They are claiming this system of commission "splitting" is antiquated and causes too much commission to be paid by the seller. They are also claiming that NAR (which has 1,500,000 members who are real estate agents and firms) is keeping this system going to keep their members receiving high commissions and fees.

NAR is claiming this is not so — that this system is based on current agency laws created through old lawsuits from court decisions. Furthermore, they are claiming that the commission paid is not regulated in any way and that sellers can negotiate the commission rate before even listing the property for sale with their listing agent and that the current system is good for sellers, as it allows real estate agents to share their listings with other real estate agents who belong to their local Multiple Listing Service which we have in Guam. Lastly, NAR claims that all realtors (members of NAR) must adhere to a strict Code of Ethics, which further protects buyers and sellers. In Guam, all MLS members are members of the Guam Association of Realtors and NAR.

As far as I can determine and understand, this is the lawsuit and both sides of it. Personally, I think this is a fairly silly lawsuit. If the sellers win their lawsuit, I believe this would actually hurt sellers. A seller's goal is to get the highest and best price they can. If they win the lawsuit, this may force local MLS companies to completely change their set ups or close their companies. Ultimately for sellers, I believe that it will stop or reduce the sharing of listings between real estate agencies



Felix

and prevent sellers' properties from getting fully distributed into the market and attract the highest sale price. More so, this will also hurt buyers, as they will have to pay their share of the commission directly to their agent, which will affect their ability to finance the entire price.

For example, if a seller wants to sell their house for \$500,000 and agrees to pay their agent a \$28,000 commission, and through the MLS, a buyer's agent presents a full price offer (\$500,000), the buyer's and seller's agents would share the commission of \$28,000 between them in a pre-agreed split. The buyer would then go to the bank and be able to finance the entire purchase price. However, based on the lawsuit, the seller would agree to only pay their agent \$14,000, and the buyer would have to pay their agent the other \$14,000. The problem is the purchase agreement would have to say that the purchase price is only \$486,000 (\$500,000 less the buyer's agent fee), and when the buyer went to the bank, they could finance only the \$486,000. Thus, the buyer would have to come up with their agent's fee out of their pocket in cash, and lastly, that may negatively affect the future appraised values of properties.

I am sure that things will be worked out and that buyers and sellers will continue to be well-represented and protected, but this lawsuit will force all kinds of changes and problems for a while until everything gets put back on track.

I do believe that the current agency laws and way properties are sold formulate the best system we have for now, and I don't see any good thing arising from the lawsuits. To have a successful real estate sale, you need a buyer. - Christopher K. Felix is president and principal broker of Century 21 Realty Management Co. Inc. He can be reached at felix@guam.net. **mbj**

Editor's Note: According to media coverage in the U.S. mainland, on Oct. 31 a Missouri jury found the NAR and some residential brokerages liable for \$1.8 billion in damages and conspiring to keep commissions high. The NAR is expected to appeal.



COMMENTARY

QUOTABLE

“We have a vibrant agricultural community on Guam — spanning all ages. ... Although the numbers are small when we talk about trying to recruit new farmers, I think we’re doing quite well. The more grant opportunities we provide, the more information and resources we provide, the more our numbers increase.”

— **Chelsa Muna**, director of the Guam Department of Agriculture, in an Oct. 17 interview with the Journal.



CORPORATE GIVING



Photo by Maureen N. Maratita

(From left) In Kook Kim, head of mission for the Republic of Korea Consulate General in Guam; Hong Soon Im, president of Miki Taxi Service and chairman of the Korean Association; Mayor Louise Rivera of Tamuning, Tumon and Harmon, and Vice Mayor Albert Toves.

The Korean Association of Guam donated exercise equipment to the Tamuning Mayor’s Office. The eight pieces of exercise equipment were installed on the grass fronting Marine Corps Drive by the Korean Association.



Photo Courtesy of Guam Community College

(From left rear standing) Kaleo Scott Moylan, Troy Moylan, Judith Moylan, Cassandra Moylan, Kenyl Magwili, student representative, board of trustees of GCC; Lorraine S. Okada, chairperson of the GCC Foundation, and Mary A. Y. Okada, president of GCC; and (seated from left) Thomas Torres II, Charles Olaguir, Cheryl Guyton-Mafnas, Jenae Therese Pereda, and Angela Camacho, all scholarship recipients.

The Kurt S. Moylan Foundation has donated a total of \$7,000 to students at Guam Community College for the fall semester.

The foundation is named after Kurt S. Moylan, who is president of Moylan’s Insurance Underwriters Inc.

The **Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Guam** donated \$1,800 for thanksgiving efforts to Mane’lu.

Docomo Pacific partnered with Toys for Tots by offering toy drop-off locations at certain locations in Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands.

Sen. Dwayne T.D. San Nicolas partnered with the Marine Corps Camp Blaz Toys for Tots by offering his office a gift drop-off location.

Enterprise Holdings, through the Enterprise Rent-A-Car brand in Guam, has renewed its partnership with the United Service Organizations on the island. As part of the agreement, Enterprise Guam team members will have the opportunity to volunteer alongside USO staff throughout the year. USO has three locations in Guam.

Enterprise has additionally expanded its support of the USO to include South Korea, where it has begun doing business. The brand will also be recognized as a USO Indo-Pacific Region Mission Partner.

GTA donated \$500 to Bake Their Day to purchase supplies and materials for crafting cakes and arranging celebrations for foster children.

The annual **Triple Family 5K/10K color run** will return on Nov. 18. This year’s run will support Sanctuary, Guam Cancer Care, Safe Haven, and Bake Their Day Guam.

The **Tsubaki Tower** will make a donation for every guest who dines at the Casa Oceano in November, in support of the University of Guam Endowment Foundation. The total donation is due to be made to the foundation in the first week of December.

The Valley of the Latte has offered free admission on the Adventure River Cruise Tour for all veterans and active-duty military personnel on Nov. 10, 11 and 12. **mbj**



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\$156 million BEAD initiative brings telecoms, GovGuam to table

BY OYAOL NGIRAIRIKL
Journal Staff

Discussions on a \$156 million effort to make internet accessible to all Guam residents are moving forward. Local telecommunications companies are participating in discussions, to include a recently held public hearing on the government of Guam’s initiative, which is federally funded.

There is, however, more work to be done to determine how exactly the Broadband, Equity, Access and Deployment, or BEAD initiative will be implemented and how the government and private sector will work together to make that happen. Will the government simply subsidize the costs for users or providers, which could help drive down the cost of monthly bills? That hasn’t been determined as the program is still being developed.

“The devil is always in the details,” said James I. Oehlerking, CEO of IT&E. He and other telecom leaders said access to the internet is important. These days most homes and businesses simply add telecom services to their monthly expenses — the way they would water or power.

“Fundamentally it’s good for Guam to have \$156 million to figure out how to improve overall internet and the customer experience on Guam working with the operators. All of us are also spending tens of millions of dollars of our own money every year ... so this is something we all can do in conjunction ... and it gives us more (support) to get things done, hopefully quicker,” he told the Journal.

“But everyone was in agreement that we don’t need a government-run network competing with existing operators.”

Daniel J. Tydingco, executive vice president for Legal, Regulatory and External Affairs; said during the Nov. 1 hearing, “There’s a particular reason why 19 years ago the government of Guam stated public policy [was] ... to proceed forthwith with privatization of telecommunications on Guam and that was with the privatization of the Guam Telephone Authority,



Oehlerking

which was the last government-owned and operated telephone entity. Since 2004, we’ve been competing in a very, very competitive landscape. And residents and businesses on island have their choice of operators to provide the services and products they (need).”

During the public hearing, Tydingco said GTA is looking forward to commenting on Volumes 1 & 2 of the proposal.

Volume 1 of the government of Guam’s initial proposal was released Nov. 1 and the second volume is expected to be released the week of Nov. 7. Residents, both private and business, are asked to submit their comments to the administering office, Office of Infrastructure Policy and Development, by Nov. 30.

Roland Certeza, president and CEO of GTA, said during the hearing the work GTA will be doing with the help of grants will upgrade services. However, he said, as the



Certeza

company looked into the initiative, GTA recognized “an incorrect characterization on all of us on how the networks represent latency.”

The latency to content networks such as Netflix and Facebook is less than 10 milliseconds, Certeza said. “We’re encouraged that (National Telecommunications and Information Administration) changed the definition, but if it had changed the definition prior to the award, Guam probably wouldn’t have gotten that much money, frankly, because of that characterization.”

Certain representations related to service. “All of us have invested hundreds of millions of dollars in the network. We’ve got lots of fiber, lots of availability of network. ... a lot of us are already delivering broadband service. So to characterize that we’re not



Boss

SEE TELECOMS ON PAGE 13

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TELECOMS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

delivering a quality of service is just a mischaracterization we believe in terms of how we're doing business. We take that very seriously in terms of our investment and certainly everything around customer experience is first and foremost to a lot of us," he said.

Certeza said many in the telecom industry also appreciate the workforce investments in the initiative. "We already know this as carriers: that we lack the workforce, the talent, on this island. A lot of us are already recruiting from off island to fill in the gaps that we need, so we welcome any investment that the program can make."

Roderick Boss, CEO of Docomo Pacific, said while his team didn't agree with a lot of the points in the Broadband Office's aspirational five-year plan, they did appreciate that the office "went to bat for Guam."

"This is really ... a rare opportunity to have this kind of investment ... to really transform the telecommunication infrastructure," he said. "The state of things on this island are much better than a lot of places — you have more choices here than a lot of similar sized communities across the U.S. And I think that competition keeps the very best services available to everybody. I think that's something to keep in mind because a lot of people like to talk about the digital divide," Boss said. "The availability of homes access to affordable broadband is pretty extensive in Guam and by certain measures there are no underserved areas in Guam."

The U.S. Department of Commerce awarded Guam \$156 million in Broadband Equity Access Deployment funding to increase residents' access to reliable high-speed internet. BEAD is a five-year action plan to improve broadband infrastructure and digital inclusion on the island.

GTA officials also noted their support of the initiative. They responded to questions, saying the Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration sent a Notice of Funding Opportunity that provides guidance to Guam on how to use the \$156 million for affordable, reliable high-speed Internet service to all broadband serviceable locations and community anchor institutions.

"GTA wants to ensure that GovGuam faithfully complies with the guidance offered in the NOFO," officials said in further comments to the Journal.

"GTA has already won the USDA's Reconnect 3 grant which will build fiber infrastructure to homes in the South," GTA said. The provider looks forward "to expand



(From left) Carlo Carino, administrator, Broadband, Equity, Access and Deployment, and Melissa F. Bettis, acting special assistant for the Office of Infrastructure, Policy, and Development, were at the Guam Legislature Building on Nov. 1.

our fiber network in the Central and North with BEAD funding."

In addition, the company touted its underground fiber infrastructure as "typhoon proven." GTA provides several cybersecurity solutions such as "managed firewalls as well as offering secure colocation at our Tier 3 data center," which align with BEAD initiatives, it said.

The OIPD is in charge with overseeing the millions of dollars in broadband investments over the next five years. This enormous investment in broadband infrastructure is expected to help bridge the digital divide, and help diversify Guam's economy and create new business and job opportunities for the community, according to government officials.

The initiative aims to achieve universal access, affordability, reliability, and cultural preservation of broadband services. It also seeks to enhance digital literacy, create jobs, and diversify the economy, according to initiative documents.

The initiative will implement various projects, such as building a state-of-the-art data center, connecting unserved and underserved areas, launching support programs, and partnering with stakeholders. The initiative has a five-year timeline, starting from 2023 to 2027. It outlines the expected outcomes and milestones for each year.

IT&E and GTA have been actively meeting with both the GovGuam Broadband Office as well as federal officials from NTIA. They also have provided initial BEAD recommendations and responded to the local Broadband Office's request for information.

Oehlerking said there are some common improvements to government functions, including streamlining permitting processes "so we can get work done faster." Some of the BEAD money can be used to improve that process, which would be "beneficial to everyone."

He added there are existing internet subsidy programs for low-income homes. "That type of model

can be used to make faster speeds more affordable to consumers in the market, particularly if you differentiate on lower-income ranges and again use it as a subsidy to make it more affordable."

"One message I conveyed is we're very fortunate on Guam to have this money, and to have three very major competent operators working on an island this size," he said. "We're deploying technology leadership here. We're rolling out 5G, we're rolling out fiber, all over the place... There's nothing being considered whether its fiber to the home, 5G or data centers that we don't know how to do. There's no tremendous new invention that's gotta get done, just a lot of hard work and figuring out the most constructive way to work collaboratively."

He said the idea of free internet for everyone has been raised before but that "only works on a very short-term basis." He said someone must be able to maintain, operate and upgrade the system. "The system doesn't just last and maintain itself indefinitely by itself."

In just the last decade, there's been hundreds of millions of dollars invested into Guam's telecom infrastructure.

The three primary areas of investment are found in undersea cable landings, fiber connectivity and wireless infrastructure to ensure services here are on par with international standards.

GTA officials said they will continue to invest millions in infrastructure projects to provide our local community with cutting edge and reliable communication services, as well as market Guam as the Pacific's leading communications hub, attracting more off-island companies to add Guam to their networks.

"We currently operate the GNC data center in Piti and are currently building Guam's first Tier 3 data center and cable landing station in Alupang," they said.

Like other local businesses, the telecoms face challenges related to the rising costs for goods and

services as well as the higher cost for labor and the limited skilled labor supply. And those were exacerbated by Typhoon Mawar.

"We do our best to keep our prices low, but these rising costs put pressure on us to increase prices. We believe that the BEAD funding can be used to offset some of the infrastructure costs for ISPs which would bring costs down," officials said. "Another suggestion is to use BEAD funding to provide subsidies to residents (\$50-\$100 per month), like the Federal Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP). GTA doing extensive outreach promoting ACP to our community with a dedicated ACP team, and currently has most of the ACP signups on Guam."

Boss said the grant provides an opportunity to build resiliency, like putting more if not all of the telecoms infrastructure underground, which he said costs a lot of money.

Lt. Gov. Joshua Tenorio said recent events, including the COVID-19 pandemic and Typhoon Mawar highlighted the importance of reliable high-speed internet. Island residents, during the months-long pandemic shut down relied on the internet for remote work, doctors and nurses relied on it for telehealth, and students relied on wi-fi connectivity for distance learning.

The funding for Guam's broadband infrastructure was increased from an initial allocation of \$25 million, according to Adelup officials. Guam received more funding than six states (Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Massachusetts, North Dakota, and Rhode Island), according to an Adelup press release.

Public comments can be submitted to broadband@guam.gov by Nov. 30 11:59 p.m., Chamorro Standard Time. A draft of the proposal can be found at Government of Guam Notices Portal: https://notices.guam.gov/notice_detail/3668. **mbj**



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'Internet for All' initiative aims to end digital divide

BY MARK RABAGO
Saipan Correspondent

GARAPAN, Saipan — Under its five-year action plan, the CNMI Broadband Policy and Development Office is committed to "chasing zero."

The Broadband Equity and Access Deployment program or BEAD is a \$42 billion federal grant program intended to bring broadband internet to all Americans that will allow it to do that.

The U.S. Digital Equity Act established three grant programs that promote digital equity and inclusion, for which jurisdictions apply.

The newly established agency under the Office of the Governor could therefore set a goal to reduce broadband service costs for residents to nothing to make it even more accessible.

The recent BEAD award of \$80.7 million from the Telecommunications and Information Administration "Internet for All" initiative will enable the NMI to deploy affordable, reliable high-speed internet service to everyone.

The BPD came in full force to the Saipan Chamber of Commerce's general membership meeting on Nov. 1 to update the community on its programs, initiatives, and developments.

De Faustina J. Camacho, outreach specialist; said under the Digital Equity program, all individuals and communities will have the information technology capacity needed for full participation in society, democracy, and economy

The BPD's goal is to ultimately create a digitally connected NMI where every resident has access to affordable, reliable, high-speed broadband services that contribute to sustainable socioeconomic growth, improved quality of life, responsible environmental stewardship, and increased social equity, it said.

To achieve this, the BPD has come up with two main programs — the Broadband, Equity, Access, and Deployment Program, or BEAD; and the Digital Equity Program, or DE.

Some of the potential projects under the BEAD initiative are the following: the Makerspace Creative Space, the Public School System IT Core Curriculum, the Digital Navigators Program, High School Career Pathways, Digital Street Numbering, and Connecting the Northern Islands.

The NMI received \$1.4 million in planning grants in May 2022 according to a National Telecommunications and Information Administration release.

BPD later told the Journal the

application process for both BEAD and DE are entirely dependent upon review and approval and the NMI's will be submitted following a public comment period.

"DE's 5-Year Action Plan will be finalized by May 2024. DE is also applying for the Capacity and Competitive Grant by June 2024." Once the grant is submitted "it will depend upon NTIA review and approval," BPD said. BPD also said that BEAD's focus is for accessible internet which entails fiber optic connectivity to the home.

Under its envisioned Digital Device Distribution and Digital



Photo by Mark Rabago

De Faustina J. Camacho of the Broadband Policy and Development Office at the Saipan Chamber of Commerce general membership meeting Nov. 1 at the Hyatt Regency Saipan.

SEE INTERNET ON PAGE 17

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INTERNET

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15

Labs, BPD can provide the necessary equipment and spaces, ensuring that everyone has accessibility to the internet and the necessary equipment needed.

“Another program we envision is the Digital Navigators and IT Career Paths. Through these programs, we can educate the public and give them opportunities that allow them to navigate and utilize the internet’s resources to their full extent.”

Ultimately, BPD said high-speed and reliable internet will be a game-changer for farflung U.S. territories like the NMI. “Because we reside on remote islands in the Pacific, it’s critical to ensure that everyone has access to a wide range of opportunities provided elsewhere. Our goal goes beyond just providing internet access. We want to empower every individual within the CNMI with the opportunity to access education, healthcare, employment, and more... we seek to give everyone the choice to connect with these opportunities.”

Aside from being a great equalizer as far as the interconnected world of the internet is concerned, BPD also acknowledged that bridging

the digital divide could allow the commonwealth to attract “digital nomads,” who travel freely while working remotely using technology and the internet.

“Improved internet connectivity will offer reliable internet speeds, meaning a minimum of 100Mbps download speed, 20Mbps upload speed, and a latency of 100ms or less. This improved internet connectivity creates an opportunity for work integration. Many individuals outside of the Pacific wanting to visit are reluctant due to limited connectivity.” However, BPD said with a high-speed internet infrastructure in place, the NMI can resolve this issue.

“Digital nomads will see the CNMI as an ideal destination where they can balance their work responsibilities with the beauty the CNMI has to offer. We can ensure digital nomads can stay connected while enjoying their stay in the CNMI.”

If all goes well with the “Internet for All Initiative,” the BPD could finally checkmark one of its goals which by 2030, “every resident will have meaningful access to robust, reliable and affordable high-speed Internet bolstered by a dedicated digital equity response that enables all of our residents to succeed in digital space.” **mbj**

FARMING

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

of the Farmers’ Association of Taoyuan City, sister association of the Farmers’ Cooperative Association of Guam. A memorandum of cooperation had been signed between the two associations in October 2022.

Six colleges and universities in Taiwan also signed memorandums of cooperation in agricultural science and technology with the College of Natural and Applied Science at UOG.

During this writer’s trip to Taiwan in September at a briefing at the Taiwan Ministry of Agriculture, Director General Vincent Lin of the ministry’s International Cooperation Section spoke of the need to harden greenhouses in Taiwan, which also sees frequent typhoons.

In a follow up email, Evelyn Hsiao-Chien Chou of the section, said the ministry has an Agriculture Facilities Program, formulated to be “a comprehensive and forward-looking initiative designed to make Taiwanese agriculture more resilient to the challenges posed by climate change and to enhance the quality and efficiency of agricultural production.”

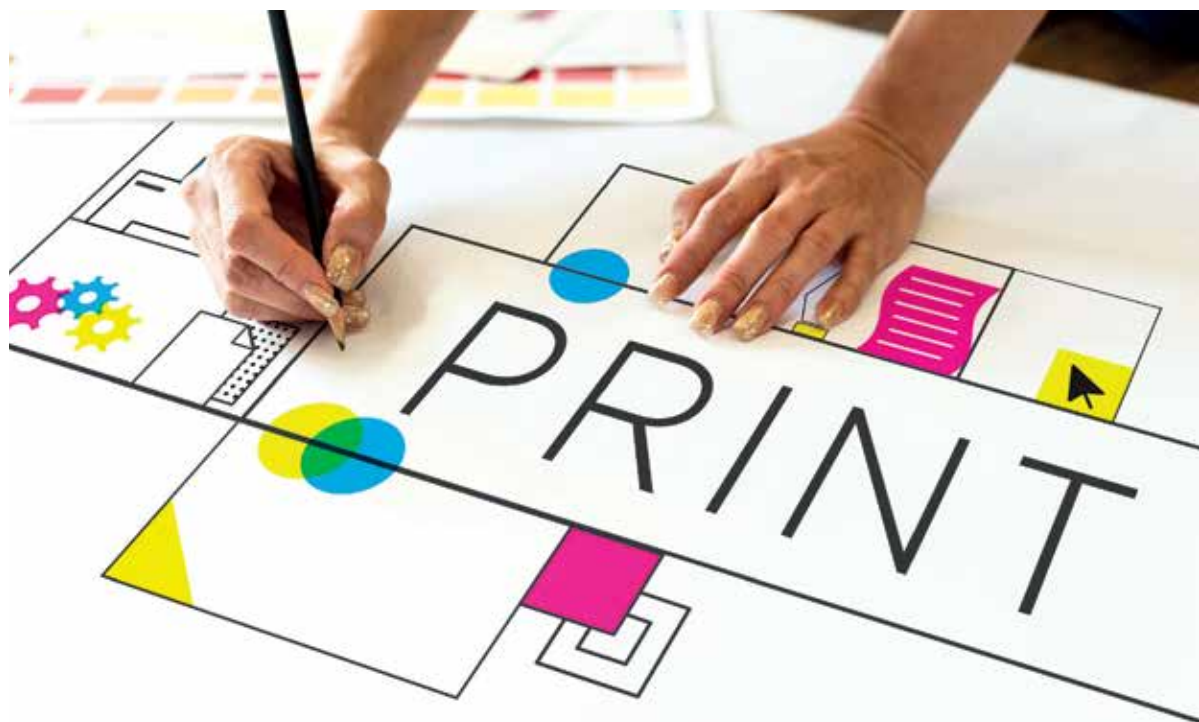
“Farmers are encouraged to

construct structurally reinforced net greenhouses,” she said. “The level of government subsidies varies depending on the region, with western Taiwan receiving up to 50% subsidies, while eastern Taiwan, offshore islands, and indigenous areas receive up to 60% subsidies.” Subsidies are per hectare and range from NT\$1.2 million (about \$37,000) to NT\$9 million (about \$278,000) depending on the type of facility.

“The program also encourages the adoption of smart environmental control equipment, which helps in automating cultivation processes and reducing labor requirements.

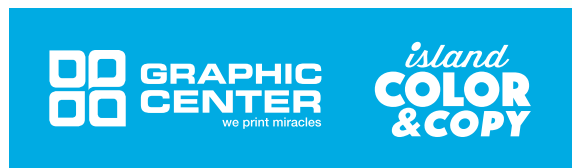
“To alleviate the financial burden on farmers, assistance is provided in the form of special agricultural loans, aimed at helping them secure the necessary capital for constructing and upgrading agricultural facilities,” she said.

Various initiatives in Guam provide produce directly to residents, including the Farmers’ Association’s Dededo market. Farm to Table Guam Corp., which began in 2012, offers direct to consumer locally grown products. The non-profit also offers “harvest tables” to encourage residents to grow their own produce, supplying locally mixed soil and professional support. **mbj**



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Business initiatives follow Walmart tuna deal

BY GIFF JOHNSON

Marshall Islands Correspondent

MAJURO, MARSHALL ISLANDS — The Marshall Islands expanded its footprint in the Western Pacific fishery in September and October to ramp up the tonnage of sustainably caught tuna supplied to Walmart. This western Pacific nation's groundbreaking deal with largest retail company in the world is viewed by many Marshall Islands leaders as key to revitalization of a moribund local economy.

The Marshall Islands Marine Resources Authority has garnered agreement from all of the Marshall Islands-flagged fishing vessels that they will supply fish for the U.S. retail giant.

"By early October, we secured a commitment from all 11 domestic vessels to supply tuna," said Glen Joseph, director of MIMRA. In addition, the Marshall Islands company managing the supply of tuna for Walmart, Pacific Islands Tuna, has also secured supply of tuna from purse seine vessels flagged in the Federated States of Micronesia, he said.

This expansion of supply comes in the wake of Walmart and Pacific Islands Tuna signing a two-year contract extension in June following successful completion of the first year of tuna supply in 2022. Through September, Pacific Islands Tuna has supplied tuna from the western Pacific caught according to internationally recognized sustainability rules that has resulted in more than 20 million cans of Walmart house brand tuna being produced.

Besides securing the supply chain to meet the tuna tonnage sought by Walmart, Marshall Islands authorities are promoting U.S. market access for sustainably caught tuna from the entire area managed by the Parties to the Nauru Agreement, where more than 50% of the world's tuna is caught.

Options for expanding PNA members involvement in the multi-billion-dollar tuna value chain was a key point of discussions during the third PNA Leaders Summit, attended by presidents, prime ministers and fisheries ministers from the nine PNA member islands in the last week of October in Kiritimati Island, Kiribati.

Joseph said, "Obviously with the opportunities come many challenges and this is what our leaders discussed with the obvious question, 'what's next?' How can we value add our collective strength to harness more economic gains on the regional tuna stock?" The success of the Vessel Day Scheme is a model for continuing opportunities, he said.

"A clear interest in the value chain through market participation as resource owners is now laid (by PNA leaders)," said Fisheries Minister

John Silk after the meeting in Kiritimati Island.



Silk

Joseph said the country's own industry is a focus of the Marshall Islands. "Our priority is to concentrate on the domestic Marshall Islands fleet to boost supply," he said.

The vessels involved in supplying tuna to Walmart will only be supplying tuna that is caught without the use of fish aggregating devices, which is certified by the Marine

SEE MAJURO ON PAGE 23



Photo by Jojo Kramer

A purse seine fishing vessel offloads tuna at the Majuro Pacific International Inc. location.

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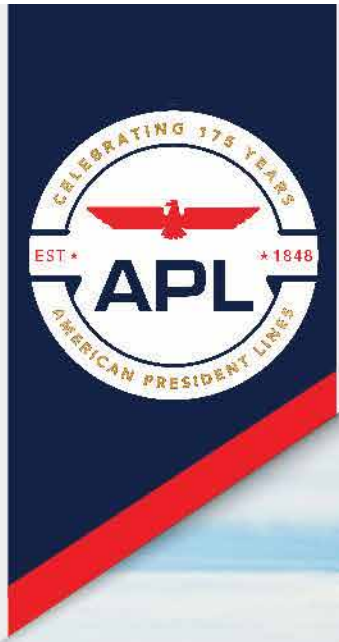
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B E T T E R W A Y S

Small businesses on-island can grow to the next level

BY ALTHEA ENGMAN
Journal Staff

As the Journal continues to report on new businesses around the island, we also enjoy highlighting and featuring small businesses that started out as an idea and continued to grow into something bigger.

Located at the Micronesia Mall, Obsessed features baby clothing and lifestyle items. The store held its grand opening on Oct. 21 after relocating from the Agana Shopping Center.

Obsessed Guam offers organic, breathable, and hypoallergenic baby clothes ranging from \$25 to \$50. Louise Gianan, owner, said her mission is "bridging the gap between comfort and style envisioning."

In 2018, Obsessed was originally a pop-up shop that sold hair bows, and was named after the owner's two daughters, Samantha and Sophia. "After COVID-19 restrictions were lifted it was difficult to maintain the pop up," Gianan said. Then the Agana Shopping Center offered her space in its Marketplace during the holidays. With the success that followed during the holiday season, the shopping center offered her a



Louise Gianan, owner of Obsessed; in the Micronesia Mall store.

new and bigger location.

Gianan said the name change marked her "long term goal" of owning a business.

Obsessed also supports other small business owners by selling and featuring items at the store, ranging from \$3 to \$38. Jewelry and stationery items are from brands such as EcoNen, Modern Day Clay,

SEE BUSINESSES ON PAGE 23



Obsessed offers a range of clothing and more for young children.

Photos by Althea Engman



(From Left) Nhan Tran, managing partner of Habibi's, Lani Castro, general manager, and Nedal Ouwer, founder and chef.

Photo by Althea Engman

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BUSINESSES

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 21

Sadie Ann Art, Olfactory Creative, and Hafa Adai Creations, which are all women-owned businesses.

Shoppers will not only find an array of girl's clothes, but clothes for boys, and gender-neutral items. Gianan said she responds to client requests, and is adding more items for boys, rather than mostly stocking items for girls, as a mother of girls.

She told the Journal that one of her goals is to remind mothers who shop at the store to take care of themselves. "The store is incorporating my own perspective on my experiences postpartum and becoming a mom," Gianan said. "Motherhood is supposed to be a great time. Beyond those Instagram photos it's a tough and difficult role that forces the mom to forget about themselves, which should not be the case."

She said it's important to realize, "Even though you're a mom, you're still a woman that deserves to have cute things for you and your kids, while achieving your goals."

Obsessed is located on the first floor of the Micronesia Mall or visit its Instagram page @stayobsessed.shop.

Lani Castro, general manager of Habibi, said what began as a catering service and serving weekly lunch plates, grew due to "regulars asking when they could expect to see a restaurant where they could come and dine in."

Now located at the Grand Plaza Hotel fronting Pale San Vitores Road, Habibi's held its grand opening from Oct. 27 to Oct. 29. Its goal is for "customers to enjoy the food in a new, self-paced setting that focuses on the family dining experience," Castro said.

From 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Habibi will only provide to-go and delivery services.

Habibi's will not have a menu during its dine-in hours from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. On weeknights, customers can expect to enjoy Habibi's Daily Specials from salads to naan bread with hummus, to platters including a mediterranean grill. On Saturdays, Habibi will offer a buffet for dinner and Sunday brunch, with bottomless mimosas from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. If an individual is allergic to or chooses to not eat meat, "Falafel will be the substitute," Castro said.

Habibi's daily specials on weeknights are \$25 per person, with Saturday evening buffet at \$42 per person, and Sunday brunch at \$39 per person.

Habibi currently has 12 employees. With its expansion and continued catering services, Castro said the restaurant plans to hire about eight more employees later. "We will still be providing catering services to current customers, to include government agencies and

private businesses but hope to grow in that area, especially with the new expanded space."

She said Nedal Ouwer, founder and chef, now considers Guam his home. His goal is to combine Guam's culture with his culture through the restaurant's slogan "Hafa Adai Habibi," translating to, "Welcome my dear."

For more information and updates, visit www.habibicateringguam.com or Instagram page @habibicateringguam.

In other business news, Delmonico Kitchen & Bar will re-open on Nov. 15 at the Bayview Hotel Guam. The restaurant was known for its steak offerings, but its menu also included pasta, seafood and more, and first opened in 2010, according to Journal files. **mbj**

MAJURO

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19

Stewardship Council as a sustainable fishing method, he said.

The aim is to increase the volume of tuna landed at docks in Majuro for onward delivery by container vessels. Although the vast amount of the approximately 300,000 metric tons of tuna that moves through port Majuro each year is transshipped from purse seine fishing boats to large carrier vessels anchored in the lagoon, Joseph and others see an increasing shift to unloading tuna for storage in freezer containers on shore.

"We look forward to getting the FSM fleet, Marshall Islands Fishing Company and Pan Pacific Foods vessels into the supply chain," Joseph said. "Walmart opened the door for us and we expect to see significant

progress (in supply) in 2024."

Silk captured the potentially significant impact of the Walmart deal to the islands.

"Imagine a day when we have more of our fish landed and processed adding to onshore employment, economic spin offs, sectoral investments including infrastructure support for these regional initiatives, connecting to international market contracts and access," he said.

The leaders discussed the fact that most of the engagement in the tuna industry is done at the domestic level with individual members. But the leaders acknowledged, the effort lacks a regional direction as they continue to work in 'silos', Joseph said. "It is clear what the leaders want in terms of the regional direction and so as officials, we have our marching orders," he said. **mbj**

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Saipan welcomes opening of OHAS Boulangerie & Café

BY MARK RABAGO
Saipan Correspondent

GARAPAN, Saipan — The NMI’s business and tourism communities welcomed the opening of OHAS Boulangerie & Café.

Joe C. Guerrero, president of the Saipan Chamber of Commerce; said E-Land Group’s new investment in the middle of Garapan bodes well for the islands’ future business outlook.

“This is definitely a welcome investment. ... Now is the right time to invest in Garapan and especially with all the infrastructure improvements the government is doing,” he said.

Guerrero, who owns Naked Fish Bar & Grill Saipan, said the South Korean conglomerate is ahead of the curve in expanding to the tourism district. “You might not really have space later, so I think it was very strategic on their part to get this beautiful corner lot. Overall, it’s a nice sign for the community that despite all the challenges, things will get better.”

Christopher A. Concepcion, managing director of the Marianas Visitors Authority; said OHAS Boulangerie & Café reminds him

of the high-end bakeries and pastries shops in Seoul. He said MVA welcomes businesses that cater to locals as well as tourists. “This is the latest development that we’ve seen in the Garapan district since the Garapan Revitalization Program started its work last year, so we’re very excited,” Concepcion said. He previously led the Garapan Revitalization Program Task Force.

OHAS officially opened with a VIP launch party Sept. 29. Among the guests were Gov. Arnold I. Palacios, Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang, members of the NMI Legislature, heads of government agencies, and business leaders.

Brian Shin, CEO of E-Land; said OHAS heralds a new chapter in the company’s journey in the NMI.

“In 2011 we landed in the CNMI with a dream of becoming a key member of the community and grow together and I believe our dream is still ongoing. But we felt that we still need more effort from our end as much as we need the support from the community. We very much trust the bright future of the CNMI and that is the reason we continue to invest here. I think this bakery in Garapan is definitely one step closer toward our dream,” he said.



Photo by Mark Rabago

Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang at the opening of OHAS Boulangerie & Café.

Shin said E-Land can now say it has a presence in the north (Kensington Hotel Saipan), south (Pacific Islands Club Saipan and Coral Ocean Resort), and center of the island (OHAS Boulangerie & Café). He also said OHAS gives Saipan another landmark tourists can enjoy.

“As a member of the tourism industry of the CNMI, the revitalization of Garapan is essential to our success. Our tourists definitely need to feel welcome and need to

find something to do and a place to go. We believe that this small bakery will add to that cause,” he said.

OHAS Boulangerie & Café, at the corner of Beach Road and Orchid Street in Garapan, is open from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily. It offers different baked goods, with bread, pastries and cakes baked daily in-house. Customers can order cakes in advance.

For more information, call (670) 233-6427 or visit the OHAS Facebook page. **mbj**



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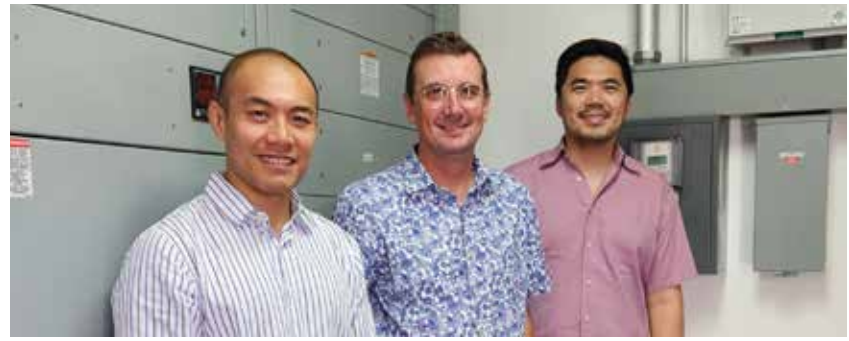
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Foremost Foods Inc. turned on Sept. 19 its 117kW DC/96kW alternating rooftop solar system supplied and installed by IP&E Holdings LLC. — a subsidiary of Citadel Pacific. The system — which is currently in a testing phase — will replace about 15% of the monthly power consumption at the Barrigada Heights headquarters of Foremost and its sister companies with renewable energy.

Photos by Maureen N. Maratita



Marcos W. Fong, CEO of Foremost Foods and its sister companies; prepares to turn on the system.



(From left) Marcos W. Fong, CEO of Foremost Foods Inc. and its sister companies; Lamonte James Beighley, CEO and head of strategy, mergers & acquisitions for Citadel Pacific; and Ferdinand Tan, chief operating officer, Citadel Pacific

The Guam Women's Chamber of Commerce hosted the Fanachu Famalao'an conference, on Oct. 19 at the Dusit Thani Guam Resort.



(From left) Claire Genereux and Carmela Tyquiengco, co-owners of Hibiscus Guam.



(From left) Kaylee Perez Villasoto, lead vocalist of KPV and The Homies; and Michelle Dulana, DJ.



Lorrie Baldevia, agency president of Assured Partners in Seattle, Wash., and keynote speaker.



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Check the Photo Gallery on www.mbjguam.com for more photos!

The Taiwan Economic and Cultural Office in Guam celebrated Taiwan's 112th National Day at the Hyatt Regency Guam on Oct. 6. The event also marked the opening of the 2023 Taiwan-Guam Austronesian International Art Exhibition.

Photos by Justin Green



(From left) Vice president of Palau J. Uduch Sengebaw Sr.; Paul Yin-lien Chen, director general of TECO; and Lt. Gov. Joshua F. Tenorio.



(From left) Albert Wu, president and co-owner, FADA Development, and president of the United Chinese Association of Guam; Sen. Christopher M. Duenas, and Sen. Jesse A. Lujan, both of the 37th Guam Legislature.

The Embassy of Taiwan in Palau hosted a reception at the Palasia Hotel in Koror on Oct. 9 to celebrate Taiwan's 112th National Day.

Photos courtesy of the Office of the President



(from left) first lady Valerie Whipps; President Surangel S. Whipps Jr.; and Taiwan Ambassador to Palau Jessica C. Lee.



(from left) Leilani N. Reklai, publisher of the Palau Island Times; and Phillip P. Reklai, co-founder of PRA Computer Sales & Services, and husband of Leilani.

Community First Guam Federal Credit Union hosted a ribbon-cutting Oct. 7 for its \$7.5 million three-story, 15,000-square-foot Hågatña headquarters and members service center.

Photos by Justin Green



(From left) Derek Mandell, assistant vice president/marketing manager; Peter Palomo, senior vice president/CIS and facilities officer; Emma Tan, assistant vice president/senior internal auditor; Carla Lorenzo, vice president/director of operations; Rick Scroggs, vice president/business development officer; Romena Nivera, assistant vice president/human resources manager; C.Mae Tuncap, senior vice president/chief operational risk officer; Gerard Cruz, president and CEO; Dulce Taladoc, assistant vice president/accounting manager; Augustus Veloria, vice president/controller; Chona Atalig, assistant vice president/compliance manager; and Michael Finona, senior vice president/chief operations officer, all with Community First.



(from left) Sen. Joe S. San Agustin; Sen. Roy A.B. Quinata; Sen. Jesse A. Lujan; all of the 37th Guam Legislature; Rolfe Banes, director; Karvin L. Flynn, partner, J. Scott Magliari & Co., treasurer; Mildred Camacho, secretary; Perry Taitano, chairman, all members of the board; Gerard Cruz, president and CEO; Andrew "Serge" Quenga, attorney and vice chairman of the board; Sen. Therese M. Terlaje, speaker; and Sen. Sabina F. Perez, both of the 37th Guam Legislature.

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Check the Photo Gallery on www.mbjguam.com for more photos!

Victim Advocates Reaching Out hosted its 2nd annual Purple Gala on Oct. 14 at the Nikko Hotel Guam STET



(from left) Delbert Calvo, member at large; Karen Carpenter, office manager; Louise Borja, president; Gloria Borja, Volunteer Support chairwoman and mother of Louise; Jon Mendiola, public information officer; Odilia Taitano-Jaime, psychiatric technician at the Guam Behavioral Health and Wellness Center, treasurer; and Julie Ulloa-Heath, executive director, all with VARO.

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