

THE VOICE

"Coming together, uniting West Maui as ONE Voice"

PO Box 10338 ♦ Lahaina, HI 96761 ♦ www.WestMaui.org ♦ WMTA@maui.net

Newsletter of the West Maui Taxpayers Association, December 2009

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The WMTA annual meeting is always a great opportunity for our membership and the West Maui community to hear remarks by the state and county officials responsible for spending our tax dollars. It is also an opportunity for updates on the high priority issues identified by WMTA members: Health Care, Traffic, and Affordable Housing. The WMTA Board encourages everyone with an interest in West Maui issues to attend the Annual Meeting. If you are interested in a sponsorship opportunity (which includes a display table at the meeting), please contact WMTA Executive Director Zeke Kalua.

The next few years obviously will be very challenging, with fiscal issues taking center stage. This makes your support of WMTA even more important than usual. During the fiscal good times WMTA was able to focus on investing tax dollars in improving West Maui. In these difficult times, WMTA will have to focus more on protecting taxpayers, businesses, and the tourism industry from potentially harmful tax policies and unfair reductions in infrastructure investment.

Of special concern is the threat that the state will no longer share the Transient Accommodations Tax (TAT) with the counties. See the history of the TAT by WMTA President Emeritus Joe Pluta in this Newsletter. WMTA will be partnering with other organizations to lobby to preserve Maui County's share of this important revenue source. WMTA is in discussions with the Maui Hotel and Lodging Association to coordinate a voter registration and absentee ballot drive for Maui hotel workers to make our joint lobbying efforts on the TAT more effective. WMTA hopes to expand this effort to all West Maui businesses and properties with workers who live on other parts of the island.

WMTA continues its active involvement in a number of issues. In October, WMTA and the West Side Committee of the Maui Chamber of Commerce met with Mayor Tavares and her senior staff to discuss innovative approaches to address the waste water odor problem in Kaanapali. A group of Launiupoko homeowners also attended this meeting and had an opportunity to brief the Mayor on a problem with utility pedestals in their development. WMTA Executive Director Zeke Kalua represents West Maui on a broad range of issues.

Please plan to attend the WMTA Annual Meeting in January. WMTA appreciates the West Maui community's support of our very important mission to protect and preserve West Maui. We encourage you to join or renew your membership, and ask that you share this newsletter with your friends and neighbors and encourage them to join you in supporting WMTA through membership. As mentioned above, the fiscal challenges and need for a strong WMTA have never been greater. Thank you and Happy Holidays.

-Donald Lehman

EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS'S MESSAGE

Aloha to all of our West Maui ohana here and abroad. I would like to thank you for the opportunity I have been given by you all to represent such a wonderful community, diverse in many ways and rich with culture.

As I look over the last 8 years I remember fondly the times that this community has stood together for much needed improvements, whether they be new parks or new police cars. West Maui at times is truly blessed.

We are at a crossroad in time where the economic status in our nation is struggling, and as a direct result of that our primary economic generator, tourism, has dropped to an all time low resulting in decreased hours of operation, diminishing visitor counts, increased prices for services and goods and recently severe job loss and the closing of local businesses.

I am concerned as I see all of this because even we here at the WMTA are struggling, and at this point in time are considering whether or not we can continue to exist here in our community. With less than half of our membership renewing their memberships it may be a sad reality that after nearly 34 years of service in our community we may be forced to close our doors.

We are in desperate need of funding so we may continue our efforts in bringing much needed improvements to our community, but we can only do that with your help today! We at the WMTA understand that times are hard, and while we appreciate that, ask you the community to consider the day after, when WMTA closes it's doors and there is no representation for our community. Whether we are here to serve the community or not, we will still walk through this crossroad together.

I humbly ask that you consider a renewal if you are a member, or even a secondary donation or new membership. We appreciate any and all forms of donations and do hope that you can contribute today.

- Ezekiel Kalua

**Together with faith, we can make a difference,
please make your contribution today!**

WMTA Annual Meeting Announcement

Thursday, January 14, 2010 ●
Lahaina Civic Center ● 5:30 pm

See Page 2 and 5 for more information

WMTA ANNUAL MEETING

January 14, 2010 ● Lahaina Civic Center ● 5:30 pm

The community is invited to attend the West Maui Taxpayers Association (WMTA) Annual Meeting on January 14, 2010. It will be held at the Lahaina Civic Center Main Meeting Room beginning at 5:30 pm. There will be regular business, guest speakers, updates on the Lahaina Skate Park and the West Maui hospital, and the Election of Board of Directors. Everyone is invited but be reminded that voting and oral participation is restricted to dues paid WMTA members of record. Your membership expiration is noted above your name on the mailing label.

Enclosed in this newsletter is a membership form and a proxy statement for those who will not be able to attend in person. Should you have any questions or concerns please call the Admin office at 808-661-7990 or Executive Director Ezekiel Kalua at 808-280-9111.

MAUI COUNTY DESERVES IT'S FAIR SHARE OF STATE'S TRANSIENT ACCOMMODATION TAX (TAT) - BRIEF HISTORY

The TAT started many years ago when the State Legislature and the Hawaii hotel industry agreed to support its creation; primarily to fund a Convention Center for the State. The agreed upon terms called for a 2% TAT earmarked exclusively for the convention center. When the final legislation was adopted in Chapter 237D of Hawaii Revised Statutes, the rate was mushroomed to 4% instead and there was no earmarking as promised. All funds were going directly into the General Fund instead. Eventually, the TAT earnings did contribute to the completion of a convention center, but disparity remains.

It's clear that the major beneficiary is Oahu. It is distributed as follows : 17.3% to the convention center enterprise special fund, 32.6 % to the tourism special fund, 5.3% to the transient accommodations trust fund, and 44.8% to the county governments. (Distribution of this 44.8% is as follows: 44.1% to Oahu, 22.18% to Maui County, 18.6% to Hawaii County and 14.5% to Kauai County.) State Grants in Aid to the neighbor islands were dramatically cut with the explanation that the TAT distribution would mitigate and replace more fairly. The WMTA believes that the neighbor islands depend on the TAT distribution more than Oahu. The rumors that the TAT is now being targeted cannot be ignored. We are extremely concerned that these revenues are being threatened with the State considering keeping all the funds to fill holes in their State Budget.

According to the Maui County Managing director, approximately \$17Million is budgeted as income from TAT for Maui County for fiscal 2010 and 2011. These funds are essential to the neighbor islands and must continue to be distributed as per the historical pattern for the very same reasons and justifications. If anything, the need and justifications for the distribution to neighbor islands has increased. The WMTA will lobby and campaign accordingly and rally the communities on the neighbor islands to join with us accordingly. Please join us in letting the Governor and our State governmental representatives hear from you as we collectively insist that the TAT distribution is maintained!

-Joseph Pluta

WEST MAUI SKATEBOARD PARK

The Parks Department has finalized the construction plans for the long awaited skateboard park to be built next to the aquatic center in Lahaina. The final plans include all of the landscaping, lighting and state of the art skate facilities for all ability levels. The complete park facilities have been made possible by a generous grant from the National Park Service that will match County funding! Great news for all our skateboarding residents that have been waiting for years for this much needed west side facility.

WMTA has been hard at work assisting the Parks Department with the complicated NPS grant application. Currently, in the final stages of acceptance, the grant application will take another few months to complete but will be worth the wait. Without these much appreciated NPS funds, County funding would have been unable to complete landscaping and lighting. The grant will provide us with a top of the line park that we will all be proud of!! Mayor Charmaine Tavares is to be commended for her unwavering support of our West Maui Skate Park!!! MAHALO! Skate on!!

-Pam English



WMIF UPDATE

Thanks to folks like you, we are the only community in the State of Hawaii to have paid for a fire station - the Napili Fire and Ambulance Station. The government had no plans to do so. That was the first step to make a safer community. However the importance of getting access to an acute emergency medical service center 24 hours a day, 7 days a week within the crucial golden hour still remained a bigger goal.

WMIF started our hospital effort in 2000. WMIF is the bridge between the community interests and the development interests. WMIF needs your added financial support to continue our community efforts. The WMIF role in this process is critical until the doors to the West Maui facility are opened.

There are no plans for the State to bring life saving access via a 24/7 emergency room. We are continuing our mission to make what was considered impossible, to be a reality!



Time is of the essence to get the West Maui hospital forward through the remaining processes necessary to open the doors for access to life saving services within the golden hour. The issuance of the certificate of need sets forth the case! See www.westmauihospital.org.

Navigating through the County of Maui Subdivision process is underway and we hope to have consideration for expediting the reviews by the agencies involved. It's amazing how much time it takes for an agency review when it comes to matters of health and safety. There seems to be an urgent need for prioritization when matters in the public need in health and safety are concerned. Our isolation on the West side makes our case all the more urgent, yet not qualified for any expeditiousness in reviews and that's an area where we are looking to the County Administration and State Administration for help. **Continued on Page 4 See "WMIF"**

GOALS & OBJECTIONS 2009 – 2010

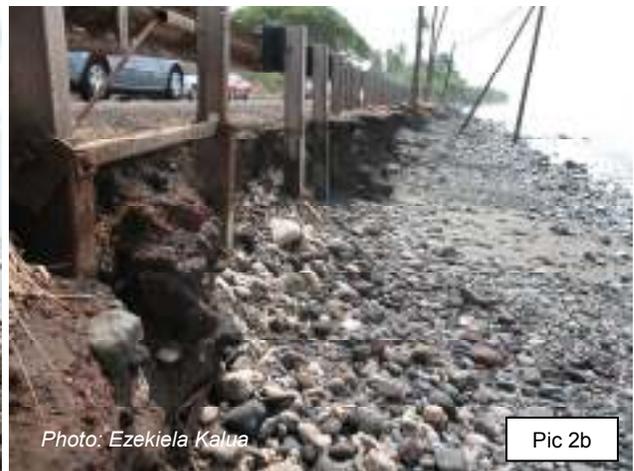
SHORT TERM GOALS

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- 1) Support development of the West Maui Medical center
- 2) Support retrofit of the Lahaina Civic Center as an Emergency Center
- 3) Work with the Lahaina Education complex to create safe evacuation routes emergency preparedness for Lahaina Schools.

TRAFFIC AND ROADWAYS

- 1) Support and expedite review of Kaanapali Connector Roadway for West Maui Hospital and Medical Center access.
- 2) Monitor the progress of the Lahaina Bypass phase 1A. **See Pic 1, on page 1.**
- 3) Support and Expedite the SDOT 4 laning project from Dickenson St. to Aholo St.
- 4) Support construction of the Mill St. extension. (Now Kuhua Street)
- 5) Support the acquisition of land from the Pali to Puamana to create a corridor for a newly created 4 lane highway inland of Honoapiilani Highway.
- 6) Support preventative roadway maintenance programs State and County to keep our access ways in good condition. **See pic 2a & 2b Olowalu Before and after.**



- 7) Support other existing non-profit groups whose goals coincide with that of the WMTA.
- 8) Monitor roadway conditions of the Pali area after heavy rains to ensure safety and access are not jeopardized.
- 9) Support the Maui County H.I.T.T. team and their mission to expedite opening roadways after accidents have occurred.
- 10) Support current efforts and new ideas to solve traffic congestion in Lahaina town
- 11) Create sidewalks along the entire stretch of Shaw St.
See Pic 3: Taken standing on Shaw St. looking mauka.



TAXES & BUDGET

- 1) Work with Maui County for property tax reform.
- 2) Maintain regular communication with the State and County elected officials.

PARKS AND RECREATION

- 1) Advocate public and private partnerships for the creation of new parks in West Maui.
- 2) Expedite the construction of the Lahaina Skate park.
- 3) Support acquisition of land for future parks and retrofit of outdated parks.
- 4) Support creation of off-highway bicycle trail system.

EDUCATION



- 1) Support the construction of a new school in West Maui to prevent overcrowding.
- 2) Support infrastructure improvements at Lahainaluna High School to include the following:
 - a. Replacement of cafeteria (HIGH PRIORITY)
 - b. Purchase and installation of bleachers in the field
 - c. Tree Trimming
 - d. Additional Classrooms
 - e. Retrofit of the Track & Field and Football field

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

- 1) Policy change to use CIP for sorely needed enclosure of sewer solid waste building at Lahaina STP
- 2) Lahaina Skate Park
- 3) Support fire station plans & policy
- 4) New Police Station for Lahaina
- 5) Sewage plant upgrades and retrofitting to increase capacity and control odor release
- 6) Removal of the abandoned sailboat that ran aground during a storm surge in Lahaina 6 Halloweens ago!!
- 7) Retrofit and repairs of the Sea Wall on Front St. Many areas are in need of emergency repairs

LONG TERM GOALS

TRAFFIC AND ROADWAYS

- 1) Improve Honoapiilani Highway to 4 lanes along the safest possible route.
- 2) Support access to medical services and the creation of the West Maui Medical Center. **See Pic 4.**
- 3) Support alternatives for bypassing road closures using cane haul roads.



Pic 4

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 1) Support prioritizing building application permits with templates to follow for typical applications and making any applications for permits for health and safety concerns including those who are forced from their homes due to fire/flood, etc. to be entitled to higher priority and expedited processing.
- 2) Support the establishment of impact fees for traffic mitigation, water & sewer and basic infrastructure needs

"WMIF" Cont'd from page 2

The world has changed with respect to so many things. Our financial economy and Health Care is a nationwide topic. Non-profit organizations such as WMIF and YOU as volunteers, public servants and donors, build the bridge to make things happen! We are your West Side Community advocate and exist solely to serve our community based on voluntary donations. We do not receive any public subsidies or government grants. What we can do is based on the resources you provide to us in financial donations. The IRS has deemed WMIF with the designation as a "public charity non profit 501-C-3 170(b)(1)(A)(vi) " accordingly.



Saving lives on the West side may depend on when this facility opens its doors.
Time is of the essence! THANKS AGAIN FOR ALL THAT YOU DO TO HELP!

Please accept our sincerest best wishes for a Happy and blessed holiday season!

-Joseph Pluta, President, WMIF

WEST MAUI TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION - PROXY

The undersigned does hereby constitute and appoint the person(s) indicated below as attorney or agent, with full power of substitution, to act in the undersigned's name, place and stead, to represent that member for quorum purposes only so that the business that properly comes before the meeting can be conducted by those present. It is valid only for the ANNUAL MEETING of the WEST MAUI TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION to be held on **Thursday, January 14, 2010**, at The Lahaina Civic Center Main Meeting Room, Lahaina, Hawaii. Any WMTA member present in person may elect to vote upon such business that may properly come before the meeting, including the election of Directors. This Proxy will be valid only for the above-cited meeting and adjournments thereof, may be revoked prior to its exercise and shall be returned upon request if the undersigned attends the meeting and desires to vote in person.

DATE SIGNED: _____
(Required by law)

NAME OF MEMBER (PRINTED-required by law)

SIGNATURE OF MEMBER

1. Please sign your name as it appears in YOUR WMTA MEMBERSHIP records. Executors, Administrators, trustees, guardians, conservators, and corporate officers are to add their Titles and, if not already done, submit a copy of their appointment.
2. For this proxy to be valid:
 - (A) The proxy giver must provide his or her printed name, signature, and the date that this proxy was signed.
 - (B) This proxy must be received by the Association's Secretary at 181 Lahainaluna Road, Suite I, Lahaina, Maui, HI 96761, **no later than 2:00 p.m. on Friday, January 7, 2010.**

PROXY: Please Return Portion Above to WMTA, PO Box 10338, Lahaina, HI 96761 or WMTA, 181 Lahainaluna Road, Suite I, Lahaina, HI 96761.

WEST MAUI TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION, 2010 ANNUAL MEETING ELECTION OF DIRECTORS

SLATE OF DIRECTORS

Paul Brown	Patricia Maielua
Pam English	Gregg Nelson
Jim Hentz	Joseph Pluta
Richard Jarman	Bob Pure
Byron "Pat" Kelly	Uwe Schultz
Donald Lehman	

The WMTA Bylaws state: "There shall be a total of 12 Directors, including the Officers. No person shall be empowered to vote or be eligible for election to any office in the Organization whose membership dues have not been paid in full."

The Board of Directors requests that a unanimous ballot be cast in favor of the Board Members to be elected as listed above.

**REMINDER:
ONLY ACTIVE DUES PAYING MEMBERS ARE ALLOWED TO VOTE!**

West Maui Taxpayers Association

P.O. Box 10338; Lahaina, HI 96761

Office (808) 661-7990 – Fax (808) 661-7992 – wmta@maui.net

Visit www.WestMaui.org

PROXY ENCLOSED

**Wishing You a
Happy & Safe
Holidays!**



Inside this Issue

- Message from the President
- Message from ED
- WMTA Annual Meeting Info
- 2009-2010 Goals & Objectives
- WMTA Project Updates – Including TAT & the Skate park
- West Maui hospital Update

West Maui Taxpayers Association: Membership & Donation Form

Name: _____
E-mail: _____ Phone: _____ Fax: _____
Address: _____ City: _____ ST _____ Zip _____

MEMBERSHIP

- I am a member and renewing my dues
 I **am not** a member but would like to join

Membership Levels

- Individuals may join at \$50.00 per year.
- Families may join at \$100.00 per year
- Businesses may join at \$100.00 per year
- Associations, please contact us directly (808) 661-7990

Comments and Suggestions: _____

ADDITIONAL DONATION \$ _____

Memberships effective for one year upon receipt of membership dues payment.

Mail Checks, and Comments to: West Maui Taxpayers Association • PO Box 10388 • Lahaina, HI 96761

TOGETHER WE WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

2010 VOTER REGISTRATION CAMPAIGN FOR WMTA



The WMTA plans an aggressive campaign to turn out the vote in 2010 starting with encouraging all eligible residents to register to vote. This is a pivotal year in Hawaii with a Gubernatorial as well as a Mayoral election.

An important link to keep handy is
<http://hawaii.gov/elections/voters/registration.htm>

The WMTA encourages all who want to be a part of our voter registration campaign to provide us with contact information as soon as possible.

2010 Primary Election Voter Registration Deadline August 19, 2010.

2010 General Election Voter Registration Deadline October 4, 2010

