

# WEST MAUI TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION

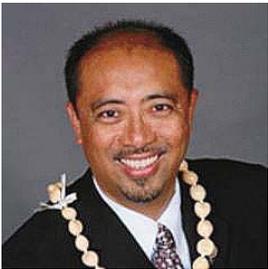
ADVOCATING FOR YOU!

PO BOX 10338 • LAHAINA, HI 96761 • PHONE: 808.661.7990 • FAX: 80.661.7992 • EMAIL: WMTA@MAUL.NET • VISIT WWW.WESTMAUI.ORG

## THE VOICE

NEWSLETTER OF THE WEST MAUI TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION  
ISSUE: SEPTEMBER 2015

### PRESIDENTS MESSAGE by Rick Nava



Leading the West Maui Taxpayers Association (WMTA) as President is very rewarding and challenging. It's clear that we need to continue to spread the message to the West Maui Community that we are advocating for them and the many needs our West Side community is striving for.

Affordable housing has been one of the top three goals of the WMTA for over three decades. We need more education of what affordable housing really means and the current economics associated with the reality that is keeping it out of reach for so many.

On September 16, 2015, The WMTA is hosting a community meeting on the Hot Topics of Affordable Housing, Transitional Housing, and Homelessness at the Lahaina Civic Center Social Hall. A flyer on the event is included in this newsletter. Please spread the word and plan to participate. We are advocating for more affordable housing for West Maui which will literally take over a thousand vehicles off the rush hour roadway from "the other side," to Lahaina every day from the thousands who make that commute each day. They would love to find an affordable housing alternative here on in West Maui to save them the time and expense but there is simply nothing available.

Transitional Housing is in demand as well with a wait list of over 100 for the Ka Hale A Ke Ola Resource Center in Lahaina. We must support necessary steps to increase the capacity at the only facility addressing this need here on West Maui that is vital to our community members in challenging times with dignity.

The Goals and Objectives of the WMTA are ambitious and yet we have a proven track record of making progress in challenging times with your necessary and valuable support.

We are advocating for you. Please consider actively supporting the WMTA with your time and monetary donation. With your support, WMTA we will be successful in meeting the challenges ahead of us.

Thank you....

Aloha,



## SAVE THE DATE

- West Maui Community Meeting - September 16, 2015 - see page 3
- Craft Fair - Lahaina Civic Center - October 25, 2015

see [www.WestMaui.org](http://www.WestMaui.org) for more details

## **A WIN FOR W. MAUI** by Chelsea Duncan, Special Events Editor, Maui News

(Originally printed in the Maui News Supplement, Real Estate Guide Friday, July 31, 2015 page T3. Reprinted with permission.)



Joe Pluta sees a bright future ahead for West Maui's real estate market. For close to two decades, he and his partners have pushed for the construction of a hospital on the west side that he knows beyond a doubt will make the community a safer — and therefore more valuable — place to live. There have been plenty of hurdles and naysayers throughout the uphill battle that many said would be impossible to win. But just last month, the land entitlements needed to start the project received their final approval from the Maui Planning Commission, following the County Council's approval in May. Pluta breathed a sigh of relief

as his part in the saga winded down, with the final phases now in the hands of developer Brian Hoyle, president of Newport Hospital Corp., who is expected to apply for construction permits within a month for the the West Maui Hospital and Medical Center. For Pluta, in real estate for 47 years — 37 on Maui, 10 on Oahu — and owner-principal broker of Joseph D. Pluta Realty LLC, making his community a safer place to live has been a top priority. "If you want to find a No. 1 concern anywhere in the world, it's going to be health and safety," he said. His work to improve West Maui didn't begin with the hospital. He saw early on that the area, despite its large share of property taxes provided to the government, was lacking in several public service areas, from parks and road systems to fire protection and public health. "It affects the real estate market and values here," he said. "Because if it's not safe to live someplace or if the roads are inadequate and all these infrastructural needs that people should have are inadequate, well, it depresses prices and nobody wants to live there, necessarily." Pluta joined other like-minded community members and in 1980 founded the West Maui Taxpayers Association (WMTA), a lobbying organization with the intent to ensure that the area would receive its fair share of tax-funded improvements by the state and county.

One of the top projects that stemmed from the association's work involved building a fire and ambulance station in Napili in the '90s. Efforts to build the station led to the creation of the West Maui Improvement Foundation (WMIF), a nonprofit with a public charity designation that was able to accept tax-deductible donations — including the land donated for the site. Funds were privately raised to build the station, with the county taking over operations upon completion. No other community in Hawaii had undertaken such a project, Pluta said, and people had been skeptical. But the result was improved public safety and drastically lower costs for fire insurance for property owners, which ultimately provided a return on their financial investment in the station. "Our logic was so sound. They couldn't argue with the logic," he said. "And sure enough, we did it." Other achievements accomplished through the WMTA and WMIF include improvements to the Lahaina Youth Center, the creation of Napili Park and the Lahaina Skate Park, improvements to Honoapiilani Highway and pushing for the Lahaina Bypass, among many others. But the largest undertaking has remained the push for a West Maui hospital. Under the best of circumstances, Pluta said, it can take an hour for someone on the west side to arrive in an ambulance to the Maui Memorial Medical Center Emergency Room after calling 911. Traffic or a road block, for example, can delay care even more. Not long after the fire and ambulance station opened, work began to determine what it would take to build a hospital. What would follow was years worth of studies, negotiations, land use processes and recovery from the financial meltdown. The biggest hurdle, besides finding the millions of dollars needed to back the project, was obtaining a certificate of need from the State Health Planning Development Association that would deem the project worthy, finally granted in 2009. The West Maui Hospital and Medical Center calls for a 24-hour emergency department, 16 medical surgical beds, nine critical-care beds, three operating rooms, a diagnostic radiology department and outpatient services, among other services, according to the hospital's website. Plans call for the hospital, which will be located on Kakaalaneo Road, makai of the Kaanapali Coffee Farms, to open in 2017 with additional phases to follow. The county has been working with Newport Hospital Corp. to get final permits in order, Mayor Alan Arakawa said during the annual Mayor's Luncheon last week. "It's very exciting," Arakawa said, according to a Maui News report. "We've been working for years with the hospital, but we're getting to where things are getting done." Once the hospital is built, Pluta expects more benefits for the community to fall into place, from road improvements, high-paying jobs in high-tech fields and additional housing. "It's going to spring-start incredible real estate values, improvements and growth and development here," he said. Now able to look beyond the West Maui hospital, Pluta can focus more on sales, including his listings in Kaanapali Golf Estates and Papakea Resort. But he remains president of WMIF and director of WMTA and hopes to next tackle issues including homelessness, affordable housing and traffic. The hospital, he expects, will help alleviate some of those issues. Noting that some 10,000 people commute to the west side for work each day, Pluta said more affordable housing needs to be built in the area to accommodate at least a portion of that population. With the hospital as the incentive to create more development, more affordable homes are likely to follow, he said. If fewer workers have to commute, that will ease traffic on the roads. No doubt there will be more land use laws to tackle, more funds to raise and more skeptics to win over along the way. But Pluta, crediting his faith in God, knows that what's best for the community will prevail. "These things are essential," he said. "They're going to happen."

# Join us at the WMTA's West Maui Community Meeting To Discuss Housing Shortages for the unsheltered, houseless or homeless

Lahaina Civic Center – Community Meeting Room

Wednesday, September 16, 2015

Doors open at 4:30 PM – Food Service begins at 5:00 PM

Panel and Program begins at 5:30 PM

## Goal

Create a dialog which accelerates, advances, furthers and positively affects the current condition of lack of accessible housing in West Maui. Deepen the understanding of the housing needs for West Maui and develop creative solutions.

## Position Statement

The West Maui Taxpayers Association Inc., WMTA, is dedicated to bringing the West Maui Community together to deepen the understanding of the housing need complexities confronting our community at large today. We recognize the need to create a positive and respectful dialog which will address the current conditions here and the steps necessary to begin to arrive at a consensus on what resources can be made available to facilitate strategic action plans in the best interests of all concerned.



*Photo Courtesy of Kuleana Connections*

Community leaders and stakeholders targeted to be selected by WMTA to serve on a panel to facilitate positive momentum on these issues are:

- Erin Lowenthal of Ka Hale A Ke Ola
- Lisa Darcy and Dean Frampton of Ho'moana Foundation
- Kaloa Robinson of Stanford Carr Development, Inc.
- A Representative from Department of Housing and Human Concerns, County of Maui
- Maude Cummings of Maui Homeless Alliance
- Thelma Akita Kealoha - Catholic Charities Director, Maui County
- Dr. Keli'i Akina, President, Grassroot Institute of Hawaii

They will lead a moderated discussion with attendees intended to amplify action and informed interest on one of the highest priorities of WMTA with respect to West Maui's diversified housing needs.

Compelling reasons for this forum are aimed at providing and maintaining a high quality of life for all residents which include dignity and respect. WMTA seeks to restore all levels through perusing safe/reasonable/affordable housing. We welcome a healthy discussion on these important issues which have been subject to misinterpretations from statements published by those who are not fully informed.

"In the absence of action" WMTA is dedicated to lead the way and work with the community and organizations to educate, provide resources, serving fundamental purposes, inform, create local solutions aligned with local needs and core values.

**MEMBERSHIP REPORT** by Joseph Pluta

We are continuing our membership and donation campaign to be able to continue our productive services towards necessary improvements and essential quality of life enhancements for our West Maui Community. Please remember, that no other community organization in the State of Hawaii can state that they have a greater list of accomplishments of success for their community than the West Maui Taxpayers Association Inc.( WMTA) working hand in hand with the West Maui Improvement Foundation Inc. (WMIF).

I'm talking about using wholly private funds for the development of the Napili Fire and Ambulance Station and the successful result of receipt of a Certificate of Need for the West Maui Hospital. Both of these were declared impossible by many and yet, they became a reality with the synergies of the WMTA and WMIF combined with the tax deductible Financial Resources donated to our WMIF. The list of other accomplishments is impressive and can be seen at [www.westmaui.org](http://www.westmaui.org).

Is there more to be done? Yes!

We invite you to join with us in our efforts to improve our Community. Affordable housing needs to happen in West Maui to take thousands of cars from West Side workers commuting daily off the road. They want to live here, but there simply is nothing available.

How can you help? Send your tax deductible donations to the West Maui Improvement Foundation Inc. and continue to support the WMTA with your memberships. Together we CAN continue to make a Difference.

Excerpt from the Maui News, Real Estate Supplement, July 31, 2015.  
Full article reprinted with permission on page 2 of this newsletter.

*Pluta joined other like-minded community members and in 1980 founded the West Maui Taxpayers Association (WMTA), a lobbying organization with the intent to ensure that the area would receive its fair share of tax-funded improvements by the state and county.*

*One of the top projects that stemmed from the association's work involved building a fire and ambulance station in Napili in the '90s. Efforts to build the station led to the creation of the West Maui Improvement Foundation (WMIF), a nonprofit with a public charity designation that was able to accept tax-deductible donations — including the land donated for the site. Funds were privately raised to build the station, with the county taking over operations upon completion. No other community in Hawaii had undertaken such a project, Pluta said, and people had been skeptical. But the result was improved public safety and drastically lower costs for fire insurance for property owners, which ultimately provided a return on their financial investment in the station. "Our logic was so sound. They couldn't argue with the logic," he said. "And sure enough, we did it."*

**West Maui Taxpayers Association**  
**MEMBERSHIP FORM - IRS EIN 99-0160368 - NON PROFIT 501C (4)**  
You can also pay online at [www.westmaui.org/joinnow.html](http://www.westmaui.org/joinnow.html)

Member Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ ST: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Day Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Evening Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

- Check here to have your name kept private in publications and acknowledgements.
- Check here to have your e-mail address added to our "WMTA E-Alerts" List

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ **MEMBERSHIP**

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

**Membership Levels**

- Community Supporter \$25/year
- Community Leader \$50.00/year
- Families \$100/year
- Businesses \$100/year
- AOAO – email [wmta@maui.net](mailto:wmta@maui.net)

**\$ \_\_\_\_\_ ADDITIONAL DONATION** WMTA is a 501-c-4 Non Profit Organization. "Contributions to civic leagues or other section 501(c)(4) organizations generally are not deductible as charitable contributions for federal income tax purposes. They may be deductible as trade or business expenses, if ordinary and necessary in the conduct of the taxpayer's business." (Source: IRS.Gov). Please check with your tax adviser.

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

**Mail Checks, payable to "West Maui Taxpayers Association", to:**  
West Maui Taxpayers Association PO Box 158 • Lahaina, HI 96761

NWS2015-09

**THE VOICE**

Newsletter of the  
West Maui Taxpayers Association  
**September 2015**

**"Bringing the West Maui  
Community Together ,  
Advocating for You"**  
A 501-C-4 Community Organization

PO Box 10338 - Lahaina, HI 96761

Phone: 808-661-7990  
Fax: 808-661-7992

Visit [www.WestMaui.org](http://www.WestMaui.org)  
Email: [WMTA@maui.net](mailto:WMTA@maui.net)

Look for us on

