

THE VOICE JUNE ,2008



For the first time in many years this message is not written by Joe Pluta. While I am honored to follow in Joe's footsteps as President of WMTA, I am well aware that no one can ever "replace" Joe. The good news is that Joe will remain a part of WMTA as the newly designated "President Emeritus". As I mentioned at the WMTA Annual Meeting, we all are deeply indebted to Joe for all he has done and continues to do for West Maui. For those of you who were not there, our Annual Meeting was a truly great event. A large crowd was in attendance to hear remarks from Linda Smith, Governor Linda Lingle's Senior Policy Advisor; State Senator Rosalyn Baker; House Member Angus McKelvey; Mayor Charmaine Tavares (who introduced her West Maui liaison, Marian Feenstra); and County Council Member Joanne Johnson. Having so many officials attending clearly shows that WMTA is well respected at all levels of government.

Theo Morrison gave a presentation on the wide ranging efforts of Lahaina Bypass Now (LBN) to mitigate our West Maui traffic problems. WMTA applauds and supports those LBN efforts. The feature presentation was Brian Hoyle, who gave an exciting report on the great progress being made to build a real hospital in West Maui. Again, we owe Joe Pluta and the West Maui Improvement Foundation a huge "Thank you" for the years of effort they gave to make that hospital a reality.

One objective of the WMTA Annual Meeting is to bring the West Maui community together to hear from our community leaders and elected officials. A second objective is to survey the attendees to ensure that WMTA is focused on the issues that are most important to West Maui. A third objective is to demonstrate the role that WMTA plays in representing and improving West Maui, and to generate financial support for WMTA.

WMTA is not a typical taxpayer's organization. Rather than fight taxes, WMTA identifies infrastructure and amenity needs in the community, brings those needs to the attention of the State and County, and argues that we must re-invest a reasonable proportion of the significant tax revenues generated in West Maui to address those needs. Without such investment, West Maui could find its attractiveness diminished to the point those tax revenues could decline drastically. The WMTA Executive Director, Zeke Kafua, is very familiar with State and County officials and operations, and does an excellent job of carrying this message and representing West Maui at all levels of government.

As WMTA depends solely on membership dues to support its advocacy, its only allegiance is to the West Maui community. However, to remain effective WMTA must improve its level of support by adding and retaining members. If your membership dues are not current, please use the attached form to renew today. If at all possible, please consider increasing your membership level or adding a small contribution. Also please become an advocate for WMTA and ask your neighbors, co-workers, and friends to join WMTA and be part of the effort to improve West Maui. This is a small investment with huge returns, and also a real bargain. Thank you.

Don Lehman, President, WMTA

Wastewater woes in West Maui

Many concerns have been brought to the attention of the WMTA via residents interested in the condition of our Wastewater Treatment programs in West Maui. Concerns vary from whether growth is possible rather than inevitable due to the current resources available at our existing plant, as well as controlling invasive odors that travel from the facility from time to time. Upon speaking with the County we have learned the following:

The Wastewater and Water Department are completely self funded divisions of the County, meaning that no money from property taxes is used in these departments' budgets. Funding is derived from water/sewer user fees only. The Wastewater Division balances their own budget from user fees so that if additional funds are required for Wastewater services or expansion either:

- 1 Rates are increased or;
- 2 Other sources of funding must be found.

County policy could be changed to allow funding from property taxes, but currently, this is not the policy. The County has a very professional staff that is working hard to prioritize the needs of the County with our current funding sources.

The 2008 FY Wastewater budget includes a 10% rate hike. WITH this rate hike, monies are only enough to pay for essential services and maintenance services. In other words, only enough to keep our system running as status quo. There is no money for expansion or growth let alone refurbishing the LWWTF plant.

We need to look for additional sources of funding for capitol construction including:

- 1 Revisit County policy to allow water/wastewater funding through property taxes and the General Fund
- 2 Support rate increases as long as management is clearly accountable for Best Management Practices
- 3 Place certain percentages of user fees collected into reserve funds for capitol improvements so these funds will start to grow now and we don't continue to face this exact same problem every year.
- 4 Federal funding for technological upgrades at LWWTF
- 5 State sources of funding such as the Hotel tax

It is imperative that we use this information to find creative ways to address these problems before they get worse. The WMTA is committed to projects such as these and we will keep you informed as to any changes that happen in the near future.



LAHAINA SKATE PARK

When you were nine years old, what was the most important thing on your mind? Well, besides homework...PLAY! LET'S GO!! This years County budget includes funds to commence the construction of the Lahaina Skate Park! The community has shown their excitement for the development of this state of the art skateboard park so our keiki have a safe, fun park to practice their skills. The current County budget calls for community involvement in the funding of the park in the form of cash, volunteer labor, and materials to make this a reality. As the County funded design moves forward in the next several months, our community will be strategizing the best ways to work with the County to expedite the ground breaking. This can not happen without your support so be on the lookout for our fund raising efforts as the summer wears on. **The County will present their design Wednesday July 9th at 6pm at the Lahaina Civic Center,** so please come and see the progress! Keep those letters of support running in the news and feel free to drop by and talk story at the Lahaina Skate Company on 687 Wainee St or call owner Donovan McNab for the latest news. 661-1637.

WMTA ANNOUNCES CANDIDATES NIGHT 2008 !

The WMTA is pleased to announce that we will be holding our candidates night this year for the 2008 General Election. Mark your calendars for October 9th at the Lahaina Senior Center on Lahainaluna Road. We are also pleased to announce that dinner will be provided by Arturo Ortiz and our friends from the Outback Steak House at the Senior Center that evening. We will publish more information as it becomes available, stay tuned.....