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West Hawaii Today

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Oil, state revenues top Lingle's talk

BY ERIN MILLER
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Dependency on foreign oil, a system that rewards use of oil over renewable resources and the impact of declining state revenues were top concerns Gov. Linda Lingle addressed at a meeting in Keauhou Thursday.

Unlike states on the mainland, which moved in the 1970s to diversify power supply sources to include nuclear energy, hydroelectricity, coal and natural gas, Hawaii still generates about 85 percent of its energy from burning oil, Lingle said.

"It wasn't in the utilities' interest to move away from oil," she told attendees at the Kona-Kohala Chamber of Commerce event. "They have a 100 percent pass-through. That's the situation we have here because of the regulatory structure."

That means, she explained, oil price increases are passed on to consumers directly.

Lingle said the Big Island, where about 30 percent of the energy is generated through a renewable resource like wind, can lead the rest of the state in testing and switching to new power sources.

That might mean convincing utility providers and the Public Utilities Commission to

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S. Kona police station moves forward

LAND SWAP DEAL BETWEEN STATE, COUNTY TO BE DISCUSSED FRIDAY

BY BOBBY COMMAND
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The next step in the creation of a permanent police station in South Kona will take place sometime Friday morning in downtown Honolulu.

That's where the state Board of Land and Natural Resources will meet to discuss a reorganization of land under the Kona Civic Center in Captain Cook.

If all goes as planned, the Land Board will accept more than an acre from the county, consolidate it with the four-acre Civic Center, and then slice off more than half of it and recommend the governor return it to the county for the site of the new public safety complex.

"The Legislature, (Land Board) and governor have always been very gracious about doing these kinds of things quickly so we can move forward," said South Kona Councilwoman Brenda Ford.

The Hawaii County Council on Wednesday unanimously approved a resolution introduced by Ford calling for the county to return the vacant property as well as the fire station to the state in order to start the process.

The substation would replace the former Kona Police Station now being used as a barracks. The substation would ensure that four officers would always be on patrol in the area between Manuka State Park and Honalo.

Presently, there are only two police officers patrolling the 335 square miles of South Kona. Added to that, an officer that makes an arrest is likely backed up

by the other officer, and that requires an officer from North Kona to be pulled from his patrol in order to have an officer able to respond to other emergencies.

South Kona police also face the time-consuming challenge of driving on narrow and winding access roads to remote areas such as Milolii and Hookena. It can take an hour or longer for police to respond to an incident in those shoreline villages if both of the South Kona officers are in the mauka Kona area.

Ford said South Kona is the only

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PRISM Project



PHOTOS BY BILL ADAMS | SPECIAL TO WEST HAWAII TODAY

Third grade students at Waikoloa Elementary School participate in the PRISM program Wednesday — a hands-on, inquiry-based, Hawaii-specific science curriculum being piloted in the classroom. Shown here, University of Hawaii at Hilo graduate student Megan Lamson, center, teaches students, left to right, Angeline Feyt, Keoni Tilfas and Laukoa Santos, about various marine creatures.

PROGRAM TEACHES HANDS-ON HAWAII-SPECIFIC SCIENCE

BY KIM EATON
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When 8-year-old Troy Estacion told his sister that the lotion she was using had seaweed in it, she didn't believe him. She wanted to know how he knew that. His answer was quite simple. "I learned it in science class."

That comment is becoming more popular with some Big Island elementary and intermediate school students since the Partnerships for Reform Through Investigative Science and Math, or PRISM, program began two years ago.

A partnership between the Department of Education and graduate students in the University of Hawaii at Hilo's Tropical Conservation Biology and Environmental Science, the program's purpose is to develop hands-on, inquiry-based curriculum on marine and terrestrial topics for kindergarten through eighth grade.

"We have multiple goals: to provide science teaching resources for teachers, enhanced science learning for students and to develop Hawaii-specific science curriculum they can utilize, understand and connect with in their own backyard," said Colby Kearns, PRISM fellow and program coordinator. "Our motto is: 'no child left indoors.' We want to get them out of the classroom, into the field and getting them involved and learning in



Waikoloa Elementary School third-grade teacher LeeAnn Oshiro works with students Wednesday during a classroom session where the children are able to touch and view marine organisms.

Survey: Medical crisis worries isle residents

BY NANCY COOK LAUER
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HONOLULU — A survey commissioned by AARP has verified what most already suspected — Big Island residents are more worried about a looming health care crisis than anywhere else in the state.

Almost half — 49 percent — of Kona residents have traveled off-island to receive health care services that were not available in their community, compared to 45 percent on Maui, 42 percent in Hilo, 40 percent on Kauai and only 6 percent in Honolulu, according to the survey.

Kona residents were most likely to say that Hawaii's health care is in a state of crisis, with 29 percent of Kona residents, 24 percent of Hilo residents, 14 percent of Kauai residents, 9 percent of Maui residents and 8 percent of Honolulu residents agreeing with that statement.

Nearly three-quarters, 73 percent, of all state residents are worried about being able to afford long-term care services in the setting of their choice, and 78 percent supported AARP Hawaii's push to increase funding for long-term care services that help people stay in their homes or their communities, according to the survey.

"The survey findings are especially sobering when you consider how rapidly Hawaii's population is aging and that the number of people age 65 and older is projected to nearly double in the next two decades," said AARP Hawaii volunteer state president Stuart Ho in a statement. "It would be folly to put our heads in the sand and believe that we have plenty of time to address these issues. ... We need to act now before baby boomers begin retiring in large numbers."

The telephone survey of 1,043 registered voters was undertaken between Dec. 20 and Jan. 20 by FGI Research Inc. It had a margin of error of 3.1 percent, for the total sample and larger margins of error for subsamples.

AARP is holding a "Caregivers Rock Rally" at the state Capitol from 1 to

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► PRISM: Curriculum designed to be easy to use, available for other teachers on Web site

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Hawaii's environment." Working individually with the teacher during the summer and the first part of the school year to develop the 9-week curriculum, the graduate student fellow then helps implement it in the classroom, using technology and field excursions as part of the learning process.

The curriculum being developed is designed to be easy-to-use so any teacher can go onto the Web site, download the curriculum for their grade level and use it in their classroom, Kearns said.

"This is so cool," said 8-year-old Austin Schneider, as he held a collector urchin in his hand, examining its mouth and spines. "Much better than regular science class. All the other classes are just learning the basics. We're learning about what animals eat, what they do, their structure. We're learning really cool stuff."

Naia North, 8, agreed, claiming it was much more fun to walk around and look at the creatures than just hearing about them from their teacher.

"Usually you don't learn by listening, but by seeing and doing stuff," she said.

In Estacion's third-grade class at Waikoloa Elementary School, the students are learning about the structures of life and ocean grazers. On Wednesday, the students observed and touched opihi, pipipi, ina kea, ina and haukeke. Using a digital microscope, they were able to see the tiny ocean creatures in more detail. After observing all of the animals,



PHOTOS BY BILL ADAMS | SPECIAL TO WEST HAWAII TODAY

Waikoloa Elementary School third-grade teacher LeeAnn Oshiro, left, and her students examine marine organisms during Wednesday morning's class as of the PRISM project, a hands-on, inquiry-based, Hawaii-specific science curriculum, which is currently being piloted in the classroom environment.

they selected their two favorites and drew a general and detailed picture of each, and then compared the two.

PRISM fellow Megan Lamson wandered around the room, watching the students while they worked. When a student asked a question, instead of directly answering, Lamson would guide them into a short discussion where the student would discover the answer on their own.

In another classroom, a kindergarten class was learning the different parts of a coral polyp and then were asked to create their own coral polyps using marshmallows, licorice and sprinkles.

"Coral use their arms to catch the food. Also, the anchor sticks on to the rock," said 6-year-old Kassadie Hurey when asked what she had learned in science class. A field trip to West Hawaii Explorations Academy was her favorite part of the class.



Top: University of Hawaii at Hilo graduate student Megan Lamson holds a sea urchin as Mariana Kaniho operates a digital microscope and students, left to right, Cameryn Canario-Pavao, Angeline Feyt and Keoni Tilfas look on. **Above:** Waikoloa Elementary School third-grade students, led by teacher LeeAnn Oshiro, gather around tables containing trays of marine organisms during Wednesday morning's class.

"I saw a sea cucumber," she said. "It was slimy."

PRISM fellow Jackie Gaudio, who has a back-

More info
► For more information, visit www.uhh.hawaii.edu/affiliates/prism

ground in biology, said this was the first time the program has worked with kindergarten students, and it was a "test" to see if students at this age would be able to comprehend the science. Gaudio said it was going really well. The kindergarten curriculum touches on two areas — Hawaii's anchialine ponds and coral reefs — and utilizes acting and artwork to help the students learn.

The program is not only a benefit to students and teachers, but also the fellows. Working with the students has improved her communication skills, Gaudio said.

"As scientists and graduate students, we're always speaking with our colleagues," she said. "It's been great taking what I know and putting it in a language for a different audience; putting it in English."

The program is funded by a three-year grant from the U.S. National Science Foundation, and Kearns said they are looking for other avenues to maintain sustainability of the program. The goal is also to expand to the other Hawaiian Islands. PRISM consists of 12 graduate student fellows who work directly with 32 different teachers in six schools.

"Having Megan here is a great asset. She has so much knowledge on the subject, and the kids love it," said LeeAnn Oshiro, third-grade teacher at Waikoloa Elementary School. "This program allows kids to get excited about science."

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