



Me 2023 | Lolomiga 0011

# TAPUITEA

*The Official Newsletter of the American Samoa Government*

IA MANINO LE FOLAUGA

Me 2023 | Lolomiga 0011

## Fa'amanatuina le Tauluga o Galuega Faigata a le Vasega Fa'ai'u Aso mai le Kolisi Tu'u Fa'atasi a Amerika Samoa

O le Aso Faraile ia Me 19, 2023 na fa'ataunu'uina ai le Fa'au'uga lona 78 a le Kolisi Tu'ufa'atasi o Amerika Samoa i le Maota o le Taea Afua i le Laumua i Kanana Fou i Tafuna. O le vasega fa'au'u o le tautotogo 2023, e 68 i latou na mauaina o latou fa'aailoga Lagolago, e 7 latou na fa'amanuia'ina i fa'aailoga o Tagata malaga, atoa ai ma le 8 na fa'amanuia i fa'aailoga Matai (Master) ma o le aofai atoa o le Afa'au'u e 83. O le Afioga ia Lemanu Palepoi Sialega Mauga, sa fai ma saunoaga fa'apitoa, ae o le Afioga ia Lisa Tautalatasi Tu'ato'o o le fa'atonu o le ODAPM sa fai ma saunoaga autu o le Aso, ma sa matua fa'amanuiaina ai le Kolisi. "Sa outou uia le tele o ala ese'ese, o ala o tauiviga o fa'afitauli, o ala o faigata." Na saunoa fo'i le Afioga Kovana Lemanu ma ia fa'aalia ai, o le Aso lenei ua fa'aailoga ai se tulaga ta'ua tele mo lou olaga. Ua tatou fa'amanatuina le tauluga o a tatou galuega faigata sa tu'utaina mai. O le Aso fo'i lenei o lo'o molimau ai le tele o maufetu'unaiga, atoa ai ma tautinoga o le le fa'avai

mo lau a'oga. E taua ia te outou uma, ona manatua a'oga na outou maua ina, ma ia fa'alautele ai lo outou iloa i tua atu o tusi a'oga ma potua'oga. Ua outou mauaina ni tomai fa'apitoa e mafaufau ai, e fatufatu ai, atoa ma le tomai e fa'afetai'ai ai ini tulaga fou. O nisi o nei tomai o le a avefa ma ou tapasa, e avefa fo'i ma ala mo nisi mea lelei e le'i iloa i luma atu. Se'i o tatou ave sina taimi e momoli ai se fa'afetai i ou matua, o matua fa'alea'agaga, aiga ma uo, ma faia'oga sa lagolagoina oe, i ou la'asaga uma na e uia. O lou fa'amalosi ma lou lava talitonu ia te oe, o le a mafai ai ona e taunu'u i se manuia. E le'o le iuga lea" Ao e agai atu i le lalolagi oni tagata fa'au'u, e fa'amalosi oe ini au lava moe mitiga e tele, e fa'aa'au ai ma fa'atupu ai lou malosi mo sou lumanai e sili atu". Na saunoa fo'i le Afioga le fa'atonu ia Lisa, na ia taua ai se mau mai le Tusi Paia na fa'asoa atu e lona tamā ia te ia o se tamaititi a'oga, e fa'apea, A ia outou muai saili le Malo ole Atua ma lana amiotonu,



ona fa'aopo'opoina lea o mea e tele ia te outou "Matio 6 :33. Na toe fa'aa'au le saunoaga a le fa'atonu ia Lisa ma ia fa'apea ai, ao e i ai i lau malaga fa'alea'aoa'oga, ia e manatua o lau tau'uga o lo'o ia te oe lava le tali. Ia taula'i pea la outou va'ai i sini ma miti ta'ua, ma ia outou tumau ai i ala na, 'ae aua le fiu" Fa'amalo le Vasega Fa'au'u o le Tautotogo o le 2023.



# The American Samoa Department of Public Works Celebrated National Public Works Week



The American Samoa Department of Public Works celebrated National Public works week from May 21-27.

Public works week serves as a reminder of the crucial role played by the men and women who design, build, operate, and maintain the essential infrastructure systems that sustain our communities. These individuals work diligently behind the scenes, often unnoticed, to enhance the quality of life in our territory.

The AS-DPW hosted various events including a opening ceremony and a morning wave at the beginning of the week concluding with a get-together celebration at the Lion's Park to highlight the impact of their services to the people of American Samoa.

The American Samoa Government thanks the Public works professionals who tirelessly work to improve the infrastructure and enhance the quality of life in the community. Fa'afetai mo galuega lelei!



[Photo credit: Charity Faatau]



# The American Samoa Department of Public Safety Celebrated Police Week

The American Samoa Department of Public Safety celebrated police week on May 15-19 with various events including an awareness wave on Monday and a family day at the Faga'alu Park on Thursday, May 19, 2023.

Police Week serves as a time to reflect upon the invaluable contributions made by law enforcement officers each day. They work tirelessly to protect our people, maintain law and order, and ensure public safety. These dedicated individuals put their lives on the line, often facing dangerous and challenging situations, to safeguard our communities and uphold the principles of justice and equality.

We also remember and honor the brave officers who have made the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty. We recognize the profound impact their loss has had on their families, friends, and colleagues, and we express our deepest condolences and support to all those who have been affected. Their memory will forever remain in our hearts, and their sacrifice will never be forgotten.

The Governor's Office appreciates all law enforcement officers, both active and retired, for their selfless service and for answering the call to protect and serve.



[Photo credit: Samoa News]

# Honorable Lemanu Mauga Attends TAOA Senior Citizens Awards Ceremony

On Thursday, May 25, 2023, the Territorial Administration on Aging (TAOA) held a Seniors Citizens Day Program where senior citizens were recognized for their impact on the territory.

TAOA recognized the oldest senior citizen, an award for community service excellence, and the oldest Senior Service Employment Program (SCSEP) employee. The awards ceremony is part of the National Older Americans week, whose theme this year is “Aging Unbound.”

Our senior citizens are some of the most treasured members of our society serving as friends, mentors, teachers, essential workers, volunteers, and caregivers. They have always been a vital source of strength and resilience in our community. Honorable Lemanu Palepoi Sialega Mauga in his special remarks stated, “Senior citizens are the living embodiment of our history and heritage.” He continued, “They have witnessed and experienced the trials and triumphs of previous generations. Their stories, experiences, and knowledge are invaluable treasures that can provide us with a deeper understanding of our past. By listening to their stories and learning from their experiences, we can gain insights that can help shape a better future. It is because of their foresight that moves our American Samoa forward.”



Director Evelyn Lili’o Satele, in her address highlighted the 35th international celebration of Senior Citizens Day and its 60th national celebration. “Age is just a number, not a factor,” Director Satele shared. She continued, “This year’s theme, Aging Unbound, offers an opportunity to explore a wide range of aging experiences and to promote the importance of enjoying the fulfillment of paving our own paths as we age. With age, comes wisdom, which leads the way into life’s experiences, successes, and the failures we learn from. To our seniors being recognized here today, we congratulate you all. Be comforted in knowing that the community does not, nor will it ever forget the contributions made.”

Nalei Moors, a dance instructor and businesswoman, was presented the Oldest TAOA registered Senior Citizen Award by Dr. Uta Laloulu Tagoilelagi on behalf of the US Congresswoman, Honorable Uifaatali Aumua Amata. Ms. Lisa Tuatoo represented the Lion’s Club and presented the Community Service Award to Dr. Faofua Faatofe, Chairwoman of the ASCC Business Department. Dr. Matautu Peter Tinitali, on behalf of the Pago Pago Rotary Club, presented the Oldest SCSEP employee to Nalei Moors, Mr. Filia Alaia, and Mrs. Tofiga Lopesi. A special presentation was also awarded to Grandma Joy Ryan and grandson Brad Ryan as the Senior and Junior National Park American Samoa Explorer.

# Lemanu- Talauega Administration Continues Annual Memorial Day Wreath Ceremony to Honor the Fallen

On May 29, 2023, it was a solemn morning with the dawn breaking, and American Samoa was slowly waking up to celebrate Memorial Day. Memorial Day is a day of national remembrance born of compassion and empathy in honor of every patriot who courageously made the ultimate sacrifice to safeguard our way of life. It was a clear morning for the four wreath presentations planned by the Office of Veteran's Affairs under the leadership of Director Paepaetele Mapu Jamias.

As Lieutenant Governor Talauega Ale and Good Lady Marian Ale disembarked on the MV Manu'atele at 6:30 am, simultaneously, Governor Lemanu arrived at the Satala Cemetery. The wreath presentation by Lt. Governor Talauega and Good Lady Marian were in remembrance of those whom we have lost at sea. Likewise, Governor Lemanu laid the second wreath to remember Korean fishers and other foreigners laid to rest here in American Samoa. He then continued the third wreath presentation laid at the Utulei Tramway on Mauga Alii, recognizing those who have perished during the tragic US Navy plane crash in 1980.

The fourth and final wreath presentation concluded with a commiserate ceremony at the



Veteran's Memorial Monument in Tafuna. The program promptly began at 7:45 am with opening remarks by SFC Fa'afetai Lauti. The invocation and benediction was performed by Governor's Chaplain Rev. Mageo Patolo Mageo and hymn selections were sung by the Office of the Governor's Special Choir.

During Governor Lemanu's memorial day special address he mentioned, "Countless unsung heroes have left a lasting impact on the history of our Nation. Their sacrifices serve as a living example of the cost of freedom". He continued, "Today, we pause in solemn remembrance and reflect on the legacy of all those who have fought and made the ultimate sacrifice. In no way can we ever repay the debt we owe to those who cannot be here with us today. Today, we also remember the families of those who have passed as they continue to keep their memories alive."

May we never fail to remember that freedom is not free!

# LBJ Nursing Services Award Ceremony 2023

On Tuesday, May 16, 2023, Lieutenant Governor Talauega E. V. Ale attended the Lyndon Baines Johnson Tropical Medical Center (LBJ-TMC) 2023 Nursing Service Award Ceremony held at the DDW Beach Cafe in Utulei. Lt. Governor Ale delivered the keynote speech during the ceremony.

“On behalf of Governor Lemanu P. S. Mauga, I congratulate each and every one of you for overcoming the many obstacles and challenges you have faced; it has not been easy,” remarked Lt. Governor Ale. He further added, “We see your commitment, and we ask that you continue giving the same devotion and care to our people. May God bless each of you for the sacrifices you have made.” Lt. Governor Ale also expressed his gratitude for the attention he received when he was recently admitted to the Medical Ward.

Acting Chief Executive Officer Dr. Akapusi Ledua, Director of Nursing Simamao Tuato’o also delivered remarks. The Ceremony was conducted by Elaine Maulupe, BSN, RN, and Reverend Petaia Tumau, Chaplain of LBJ-TMC, delivered both the Invocation and Benediction.

These are the individual awards that were presented today:

## Nurse of the Year

Luaao Wasko, RN

## 50 Years of Service

Faatigafua Valusaga, LPN

## 40 Years of Service

Simamao Tuato’o, RN (Director of Nursing)

Tufanua Tupua, CCHT

## 20 Years of Service

Tuaotala Faalilo, RN

Monika Iosefa, RN

Miriama Ioka, CNA

Peggy Uiki, CNA

Dorothy Coffin, WC

Fei Itamua, Nsg. Adm. Coordinator

## Unit Manager of the Year

Uluulufau S. Avegalio, RN

## Best Unit

Intensive Care Unit (ICU)

## Best Clinic

Pediatric Clinic

Other recognitions include the following:

## NCLEX Registered Nurse

Faletuese Tafiti-Leiato

Ria Yola

Mautumua Bryanna Maulupe

Min Chul Shin

Cierra Semo

Jennifer Ypil Bancod

Eric Ypil

## NCLEX Licensed Practical Nurse

Debbie Afalava

Lafoaina Wendt

Chesiah Javier

Danielle Taiula

Laulauga Misa

Jaclyn Keil

Emele Iosefa

## Wound Care Certification

Shane Chen, RN

Meli Manulo, RN

Ma Moya Bejer, RN

Siaifoi Tafiti, RN

Uluulufau Avegalio, RN

Janet Ursolino, LPN

Stella Thompson, LPN

Mark Espiritu, LPN

July Tuvale, LPN

Denise Allen, CNA

Asofausia Paulo, CNA

Esmerelda Iese, CNA







# Key Leader Engagement Part III: USARPAC

On May 8, 2023 the Honorable Governor Lemanu P. S. Mauga met with U.S. Army Pacific Commanding General Charles A. Flynn to discuss American Samoa's future plans on establishing itself as a hub for the U.S. in the Pacific region.

The rising power and influence of China in the Pacific region prompted the Honorable Governor Lemanu to take preliminary steps to build up American Samoa's defense economically and strategically. As the U.S. Territories are the doorstep in the United States it is only imperative that American Samoa initiate a strong partnership with key leaderships promoting regional security presence and deter potential adversaries. Additionally, the discussion overarches the opportunity to strengthen relationships between the United States and the Pacific Region through maximizing future opportunities.

Three important topics were discussed during the meeting:

- General Commander's decision to deploy a civil affairs team to conduct an assessment in American Samoa, with the aim of assisting in the development of better strategic planning capabilities.

- Furthermore, the discussion also encompassed the issue of Space A military travel options that were suspended amidst the pandemic. Facilitating the commencement of Space A, specifically the C17 and C130 flights, has the potential to provide travel options for both military personnel and veterans,
- The potential presence of the National Guard to provide support as needed. An upcoming meeting among Commanders is scheduled this week wherein General Flynn will address the issue with National Guard leadership.

These actions demonstrate the government's commitment to supporting American Samoa and improving its strategic readiness.

The Honorable Governor Lemanu P. S. Mauga presented a Samoan gift to both the General Commander and spouse. The same gesture was afforded to the Honorable Governor and First Lady Ella Mauga. MAJ Jerrod T. Avegalio, a Leone native from the Avegalio family, assisted the Honorable Governor and A.S. delegation to meet with the Command General. Avegalio has expressed his passion in Aviation and seeks to serve as an instrument for empowering aspiring soldiers from American Samoa in their pursuit of military excellence.



# Day 1 American Samoa at the Territorial Climate & Infrastructure Workshop

The U.S. Department of Interior Office of Insular Areas convened the Territorial Climate Infrastructure Workshop 2.0 for the second year since the announcement of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law signed by President Biden on November 15, 2021 and the Inflation Reduction Act last year. The objective is to provide assistance to all territories in order to maximize their opportunities to successfully apply for and receive these federal funds for priority climate and infrastructure projects. To achieve this, federal agencies and significant subject matter related organizations have been invited to share about available resources to include new funding opportunities and technical assistance. The seven specific focus areas are

1. Built Infrastructure
2. Nature Based Solutions
3. Energy
4. Broadband
5. Water
6. Invasive Species
7. Cleanup Revitalizing & Recycle.

The American Samoa BIL/IRA team led by AS BIL/IRA Coordinator, ODAPM Director Lisa Tuatoo includes Directors and staff of departments and offices with related mandated functions with priority projects submitted and prepared under BIL/IRA funds.

The Executive Director Wallon Young ASPA, CEO Chuck Leota ASTCA, Directors Falenaoti

Fruean DPA, Faleosina Voigt DPW, Petti Matila ASDOC, Faamao Asalele ASEPA, Misipati Salanoa TEO, Amaama Tofaeono GRO, and Tavita Togia BIODIVERSITY.

The Honorable Lemanu P.S. Mauga, Governor of American Samoa met with the AS BIL/IRA team on Sunday, May 7, 2023 in Honolulu, Hawaii before his departure for home reminded the directors and staff about the importance of this TCIW 2.0 workshop and for the team to successfully submit applications to request funds for critical priority climate and infrastructure projects for the territory. The Governor Lemanu encouraged the team to network, learn from technical assistance offered and foster relationships with federal counterparts to ensure that the territory will benefit from these once in a generation funding opportunities to address climate change, improve infrastructure and save lives of the people of American Samoa.

In her presentation during the opening ceremony, Director Lisa Tuatoo shared on behalf of the territory, the priority projects, gaps and challenges experienced when preparing applications under BIL/IRA funding opportunities. Although local cost matching has been waived by the DOI grant funding opportunities for the territories, a request was made for all other federal agencies to follow suit in this initiative.

Other challenges include the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Build America Buy American Act (BABAA), Supply chain issues, DOI annual allocation, Period of Performance (POP), Equity in competitive grants and training and capacity building to name a few. In accordance to the TCIW 2.0 agenda, the first presentation from American Samoa is under the Built Infrastructure. This was presented by DPW Director Faleosina Voigt on behalf of herself and DPA Director Falenaoti Loi-On Fruean on the priority Built Infrastructure projects list. Other territories gave similar presentations after Director Faleosina Voigt. These were followed by two Infrastructure breakout sessions about resiliency and opportunities for transportation infrastructure compliance, regulatory, construction and sustainability considerations. When asked about one outcome from this TCIW 2.0, Director Lisa Tuatoo responded, “to approve all of American Samoa’s BIL/IRA grant applications.”

The TCIW 2.0 continues with a five full day agenda from Monday, May 8th until Friday, May 12, 2023. The federal agencies in attendance are the US Army Corp of Engineers, Federal Emergency Management Agency, US Department of Transportation, US Department of Interior, US Economic Development Agency, US Environmental Agency, General Services Administration, US

Department of Agriculture, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, US Coast Guard, DOI Bureau of Reclamation, US Federal Communications Commission National Telecommunications and Information Administration and National Renewable Energy Laboratory. The territories attending are American Samoa, Guam, Commonwealth of Northern Marianas (Saipan) and US Virgin Islands.



# Day 2 American Samoa at the Territorial Climate & Infrastructure Workshop

In a full fledged agenda on the second day of the Territorial Climate Infrastructure Workshop 2.0, the presentations from American Samoa began with the Invasive Species focus area and is presented by Deputy Director Mrs. Selaina Tuimavave of the Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources and Mr. Tavita Togia of the Biodiversity office of the Governor's office. The Nature Based solutions presentation is delivered by Director Petti Matila of the Department of Commerce and Mr. Tavita Togia of the Biodiversity office.

The Cleanup Revitalizing and Recycle presentation is led by Director Faamao Asalele of the American Samoa Environmental Protection Agency. In all of their presentations, American Samoa directors identified priority climate and infrastructure related projects, associated challenges and desired outcomes of their proposals. The territories of Guam, Commonwealth of Northern Marianas (Saipan) and US Virgin Islands also shared their projects.

In addition to the Territory's presentations, the keynote address for today is by the US Department of the Interior Ecosystem Restoration Program. This is followed by the federal round tables sub-sessions for the American Samoa Pollution with US Environmental Protection Agency and with the American

Samoa Nature Based solutions with Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Interior (USFWS, USGS, BOR), US Department of Agriculture (NRCS, USFS), US Department Of Transportation, National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration, US Army Corp of Engineer and USEPA. An opportunity was also afforded to American Samoa to meet with the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, a national laboratory of the US Department of Energy, Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, operated by the Alliance for Sustainable Energy, LLC. The NREL is providing assistance with updating of the American Samoa State Energy Security Plan and is working closely with the American Samoa Renewable Energy Committee. The American Samoa Power Authority Executive Director Wallon Young raised the critical and urgent issue of the LBJ Tropical Medical Center large standby generator from 1968 where the parts needed are no longer manufactured and we had to buy them from foreign countries. He also states that although we are discussing renewable energy, for redundancy and back-up purposes, we are still retaining diesel for electricity needs.

The General Services Administration session by Ms. Brandy Untalan, the Customer Services Director for Guam, CNMI, American Samoa, Australia and Pacific Islands shared about the types of assistance they provide to all government customers and vendor support. She also encouraged territories to request seminars and training on a variety of GSA topics and resolutions. The GSA training sessions include GSA e-Tools Suite (Advantage, E-Library, E-Buy), GSA Autochoice, GSA vendor and customer self service (VCSS) Invoicing/Payment and State and local programs. Under the BIL, Ms. Untalan shares about the GSA MAS program with electric vehicle charging stations and electric vehicles, and under the GSA Autochoice, were the alternative fuel vehicles such as medium and heavy duty trucks, buses, ambulances, wheelchair vehicles and wreckers and carriers. She also provided information on the 1122 Program and identified Ms. Sapi Ma'o Ena, American Samoa Office of Procurement Deputy Director as the State Agency for Surplus Property contact.

In taking advantage of the opportunity with federal partners attending the TCIW 2.0, a follow-up meeting of the AS Fagaima Drainage project with Mr. Mathew Jepsen of FEMA and Gabrielle Gershe of the Federal Highway Administration, American Samoa



Government Chief of Staff Loa Tuimavave Tauapai Laupola, Department of Public Works Director Faleosina Voigt, DPW Senior Engineer Estella Rubin, ODAPM Director Lisa Tuatoo, AS State Hazard Mitigation Officer Sandi Tonumaipea and the ODAPM Hazard Mitigation team Camilla Poufa and Max Haleck III with FEMA representative Michael Kern discussed alternative routes of the previously approved plans to ensure eligibility under separate federal funding available for this project. A week earlier, the Fagaima drainage project meeting held at the ODAPM office in Tafuna was attended by Honorable Senator High Chief Magalei Logovii, Honorable Representatives Larry Sanittoa and Sam Meleisea with DPW and ODAPM teams to provide an update of this long overdue project that will greatly benefit residents of the Tualauta district and the people of American Samoa utilizing these public roads.



# Day 3 American Samoa at the Territorial Climate & Infrastructure Workshop



In continuing the momentum of a resourceful packed schedule on day three (3), the Territorial Climate Infrastructure 2.0 begins with the Energy Infrastructure Reinvestment (EIR) program describing the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 appropriations and eligibility under the Energy Infrastructure Reinvestment 1706 EIR. The US Department of Energy Loan Program Office confirms their commitment whereby the LPO “engages early with applicants and remains a partner throughout the lifetime of the loan.” A special note states that IRA appropriates \$5 billion through September 30, 2026 to carry out EIR with a total cap on loans of up to \$250 billion. Next were federal presentations on Energy and Invasive Species then followed by roundtable discussions for the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands on Energy and the US Virgin Islands on Invasive Species with federal counterparts.

The federal roundtable continued with American Samoa on Energy

with National Renewable Energy Laboratory, US Environmental Protection Agency, US Department of Energy, US Department of Transportation, US Department of Agriculture, and US Economic Development Administration.

The Environmental Justice Technical Assistance is presented by the US EPA Region 9 Laura Ebbert, Director of Tribal, Intergovernmental and Policy Division and CJ Mishima, Environmental Justice Coordinator. They described environmental justice as a “phrase we use to describe the principles of fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all persons.” The EJ grant programs shared are:

1. Thriving Communities Technical Assistance Centers
2. Environmental Justice Thriving Communities grants and Environmental and Climate justice grant programs.

Some eligible grants activities include building refurbishment that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and other pollutants, development of disaster preparedness plans, community revitalization planning in support of climate resiliency and adaptation to name a few.

The American Samoa Government Chief of Staff High Chief Loa Tuimavave Tauapai Laupola and ASG BIL/IRA Team lead/Coordinator, ODAPM Director Lisa Tuatoo were invited by the Honorable Ms. Brenda Mallory, the Chairman of the White House Council on Environmental Quality to a meet and greet. This meeting is with each territory’s governor’s representatives to have an opportunity to listen and learn directly on issues of importance to them. The Chairman would like to learn about the US Territories climate change, conservation and environmental justice agenda and how the federal government can be a partner.

The consensus from the territories were shared challenges with the National Environmental Policy Act, Build America Buy America Act, Supply chain shortage, Equity in competitive grant applications to include attention to the measuring tools such as Benefit Cost Analysis, Threat and Hazard Identification of Risk Assessment, etc. and to have a more uniformed holistic approach. For American Samoa, the issue of the lack of a Federal Aviation Administration tower at the Pago Pago International airport was raised. The COS HC Loa has pleaded with the Honorable Chairman to hear and understand our priority needs especially with critical climate and infrastructure priority projects expressed by Honorable Lemanu Mauga, Governor of American Samoa.

Mr. Tavita Togia presented on behalf of American Samoa during the Invasive Species federal roundtable sub-session with US DOI (Fish & Wildlife Service, US Geological Survey, National Park Service, Office of Insular Affairs), US Department of Agriculture (US Forest Service, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Agricultural Research Service) National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Hawaii and US Indo-Pacific Command with ASG directors and staff in attendance. He shared about specific invasive species in the territory and ongoing and completed eradication work thus far.

The federal agencies representatives sang his praises, even highly commended Mr. Tavita Togia on his work and encouraged him and his team to continue doing great things.

The breakout sessions that follow are the Electric Vehicles, Energy Generation and Storage, Renewables and Advancing a National Early Detection and Rapid Response Framework for Invasive Species: Benefits of the Framework and Collaboration Opportunities with Territories. The concurrent sub-sessions afterwards were:

1. National Renewable Energy Laboratory All Territory Roundtable Discussion on Territorial Energy and Security Plans
2. Protecting Island Communities through Biosecurity
3. Hazard Mitigation Planning (Federal Emergency Management Agency).

During the Hazard Mitigation Planning session, American Samoa has been recognized by FEMA as having a completed and updated Territorial Hazard Mitigation Plan until 2025. American Samoa has a strong hazard mitigation program. The American Samoa State Hazard Mitigation Officer Sandi Tonumaiepa shared about the territory's Hazard Mitigation Council chaired by Honorable Talauega E.V. Ale, Lieutenant Governor and Governor's Authorized Representative who has been actively involved with the HM council and his visible proven leadership contributes to moving hazard mitigation projects forward.

The American Samoa team consisting of the COS HC Loa, DOC Director Petti Matila, ASTCA CEO Chuck Leota, ODAPM Director Lisa Tuatoo, Dr. Ginger Porter, Mr. Ted Leiato, Mrs. Edna Asalele Noga, Mr. Joseph Meredith met with the US Department of Commerce National Telecommunication and Information Administration representatives Mr. Tim Stelzig, Regional Director (Alaska, Territories IFA), Mr. Cort Buffington, Technical Assistance Advisor IFA), Mr. Ethan Lake and two others who provided important information about the Broadband Equity Access and Deployment program. The Internet for All (IFA) “ensures that everyone in America has access to affordable, reliable, high-speed internet.” A good amount of time was spent discussing the “affordability” part of the IFA goal for American Samoa. The DOC Director Petti Matila inquired with the federal partners on the projected timeline of application, award, project installation and completion period relevant to the BEAD funding guidelines. The CEO Chuck Leota asked about the federal review status of the ASTCA's Middle Mile application under BIL and was advised by Mr. Seilzig that he will reach out to the Middle Mile team and inform the CEO. In his efforts to advocate for American Samoa, COS HC Loa requested with the NTIA team to help our territory achieve the goals of President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law of the internet for all.



# Day 4 American Samoa at the Territorial Climate & Infrastructure Workshop

The Territorial Climate Infrastructure Workshop 2.0 day four (4) began with welcoming congratulatory news for American Samoa announcement by Honorable Carmen Cantor for the approval of the Inflation Reduction Act technical assistance program in the amount of \$2.8 million to the American Samoa Office of Disaster Assistance and Petroleum Management (ODAPM) for efforts to “collect and update data on sea level rise to ensure information is most current and accurate for all seven islands.” The Assistant Secretary Cantor continued to announce the US Department of Interior grant awards for Guam, Commonwealth of Northern Marianas and the US Virgin Islands. The TCIW 2.0 participants also had an opportunity to hear from the Honorable Brenda Mallory, Chairman of the White House Council on Environmental Quality. This was followed by the White House Ocean Climate Action Plan briefing. The American Samoa Government Chief of Staff Loa Tuimavave Tauapai Laupola spoke on behalf of American Samoa and the territories in a plea to federal leadership in attendance to identify ways to remain in compliance with regulations, while streamlining federal government processes to expedite the implementation of critical and life-saving infrastructure projects. The Chief’s remarks was met with a standing ovation and cheers and applause from the territories.

The morning sessions included federal government agencies presentations on Broadband and Water. The Broadband presentation discussed the Federal Communications Commission National Broadband Map Fabric updates, next steps, affordable connectivity program and the ACP outreach grant program components. Other important topics include the FCC rulemaking to prevent digital discrimination and resources available for National Broadband Map, Affordable Connectivity programs to include Outreach site for related materials. The US Department of Agriculture presented on the USDA and overview of Rural utilities service program. The types of funding for rural broadband include telecommunications infrastructure loan, rural broadband, community connect grant and ReConnect programs, and the Broadband technical assistant grant. FEMA also discussed the Interagency Recover Coordination Broadband and Digital as a Covid 19 Recovery project. As mentioned in the Hawaii Recovery Operations Plan November 2020, “Long term community recovery is the process of establishing a community based, post disaster vision and identifying projects and project funding strategies best suited to achieve that vision..”



The federal Water roundtable for American Samoa with the US Environmental Protection Agency, US DOI Bureau of Reclamation, US Geological Survey, US Department of Agriculture RD and the National Resources Conservation Service. The American Samoa Power Authority Executive Director Wallon Young presented the Water Infrastructure upgrade, project statuses of the water line replacement, reservoir upgrade to name a few. He also shared about the challenges encountered with shortage of engineers and skilled workers and expounded on the priority projects and needs. The AS EPA Director Faamao Asalele’s invaluable contribution to the roundtable session further strengthened American Samoa’s position on the importance of Water infrastructure projects articulated by the ASPA EO Wallon Young.

The American Samoa delegation truly showcased in all TCIW 2.0’s seven focus areas. The American Samoa Telecommunications Authority Chief Executive Officer Mr. Chuck Leota, Mrs. Edna Asalele Noga and Mr. Ted Leiato well represented the ASG with their Broadband presented at the American Samoa Broadband roundtable with National Telecommunications and Information Administration, FCC, USDA RD, Economic Development Administration and FEMA. One of the priority projects include an undersea fiber cable to the neighboring islands.



Mrs. Edna Noga presented on behalf of ASTCA and expounded on the broadband wireless infrastructure, cable landing station and technical operations center, the BLAST network upgrade and of course Cybersecurity. American Samoa needs to harden its existing infrastructure to ensure Internet for All under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funds and protection of its communication assets critical in emergency coordination of emergency response efforts in the untimely events of disasters. Again, a focus on life saving measures for the people of American Samoa.

The sessions that follow include Broadband IFA, Reclamation program and Scenario planning and the US EPA BIL drinking water, wastewater infrastructure. American Samoa maximized these opportunities with full attendance from departments and offices with related functions. The COS HC Loa Tuimvave Tauapai Laupola ensured the ASG's needs are addressed and challenges, gaps are bridged in order to receive these generational federal opportunities are maximized for our Territory.



# Day 5 American Samoa at the Territorial Climate & Infrastructure Workshop



Friday, May 12th, 2023 was the last day of the Territorial Climate Infrastructure Workshop 2.0 and is still well attended by the American Samoa delegation especially since the morning session is focused on Office Hours. These office hours are one-on-one opportunities between territories and their federal counterparts in the seven focus areas of this workshop; Water, Broadband, Cleanup, Revitalization, and Recycling, Energy, Nature based solutions and Invasive Species and Built Infrastructure. The territories utilize these office hours to discuss in detail grants related issues to include federal regulations and solutions to help push priority projects forward. The US Department of Interior Secretary Honorable Debra Haaland heard the territories' unified request during the TCIW 1.0 last year to allow more time for office hours and this is the reason for these interactive sessions addressing the territories' needs and challenges with their application

development and submissions under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act funding opportunities.

The last and critically important session for the TCIW 2.0 is the National Environmental Policy Act presentation by the US Army Corp of Engineers. The presentation was done by Ms. Marian Dean, the Environmental Planner for the USACE. All territories attended and asked environmentally related questions about the NEPA process and compliance issues. The presentation included photos of the Faleasao solar panel area, the High Court of American Samoa and the Jean P. Hayden museum slides discusses whether the sites are listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and if operations and maintenance is approved by the Territorial Historic Preservation Office, and if there will be changes in structural capacity, appearance, site or area, change in

property boundary, archaeological site change in land use and if there will be an increase of traffic in the area that will affect the new proposed historical landmark project.

In her closing remarks, Ms. Gretchen Sierra Zorita shares her awareness of the pacific territories in these two TCIW and would like to strengthen these relations in a country that is focused on east coast region." She thanked everyone for "such amazing discussions of sharing and relationship building." The Honorable US Department of Interior Assistant Secretary for Insular and International Affairs, Carmen , G. Cantor thanked the dedicated DOI team lead Mr. Basil Ottley, Vanitha Sivarajan, Julianna Rice, Mathew Dutko, Lydia Faleafine Nomura, Marina Tinitali and the rest of the hard working staff for effective coordination in getting the federal partners and territories together for the workshop.

She thanked the OIA team that “has come together to organize and host a successful workshop 2.0, they have worked for several months and from all I have heard from federal partners and territorial stakeholders, the team has over delivered on their promise to make this week an invaluable experience to all who attended.”

Ms. Cantor joins Gretchen in her recognition of the “tremendous support our federal partners have enthusiastically and consistently provided throughout this workshop. The office of insular affairs has a broad mandate for advancing the territory's priorities throughout the federal system and we depend on our federal partners to provide and share their expertise they have delivered. Thank you to all the federal partners that have attended in person and virtually and thank you to White House office of intergovernmental affairs of introductory Rodriguez and associate director Gretchen Sierra Zorita for your continued support and collaboration, we cannot do this successfully without you two.”

She continued, “to our brothers and sisters from American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana islands Guam and the US region islands, I wish all of you safe travels home. Please thank your respective governors for allowing you to spend a week away from your normal duties and responsibilities and for having faith in our promise that this workshop will be a worthwhile investment. You have spent your time at the workshop gaining important insights investing in new relationships and identifying new opportunities.

We have also listened to your challenges and we understand your frustrations. IA is committed to working with you and our federal partners to find ways to push through the obstacles and barriers so that you can have the opportunity to build the infrastructure you need to develop and sustain prosperous and safe communities.”

Mr. Basil Ottley then thanked and acknowledged all the BIL/IRA Coordinators from each territory and asked the ASG Chief of Staff Loa Tuimavave Tauapai Laupola to end the TCIW 2.0 with farewell remarks from American Samoa delegation with singing of the “Ua Faafetai” song and a short tauluga dance to end the five-day event on a higher note. American Samoa opened the workshop with a warrior dance and it’s only proper to end it the Faa Samoa way. Viia le Atua. O le faamoemoe ua taunuu, o le laau o le soifua lea.





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## Upcoming Events

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- June 3 Fa'asao Marist High School Graduation
- June 8 Kanana Fou High School Graduation
- June 9 Manu'a & SPA High Schools Graduations
- June 11 Iakina Adventist Academy Graduation
- June 12 Fagaitua High School Graduation
- June 13 Samoan High School Graduation
- June 14 Army Birthday & US Flag Day
- June 14 Nuuuli Vocational Tech High School Graduation
- June 15 Leone High School Graduation
- June 16 Tafuna High School Graduation
- June 18 Father's Day
- June 19 Juneteeth Independence Day
- June 30 Island-Wide Clean Up