

WOEDA Merges With Kapolei Chamber of Commerce

Two strong voices become one powerful advocate for West O‘ahu

The City of Kapolei opened for business in 1992. As the city grew, business leaders saw that Kapolei would benefit from a strong voice that would advocate for economic growth and prosperity for the entire West O‘ahu region. In 2001, they formed the West Oahu Economic Development Association (WOEDA) to focus on job creation and economic growth, and to lobby for a mass transit alternative for the region.

In 2008, the Kapolei Chamber of Commerce (KCC) was formed to represent the interests of the business community in Kapolei and Ewa through more conventional chamber of commerce services.

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—State Senator Will Espero

The chamber would promote policies that support a healthy economic environment for its members, connect them with networking opportunities in both business and government, and offer resources and programs designed to promote a robust business climate in the region.

Recently, the two organizations recognized that they shared overlapping missions, and saw the advantage of combining their forces in a merger under the KCC name. The “new” Kapolei Chamber of Commerce will be a single voice advocating for its members and the entire business community in West O‘ahu. Its combined mission is to promote an economic climate in which businesses can grow and prosper.

Under the merger, the current chair of the WOEDA board of directors, Chris Lee will join the Kapolei Chamber Board of Directors.

“Becoming a unified voice for businesses and economic development in West O‘ahu, as



well as the community at-large, is what’s important to both the members of

WOEDA and KCC,” explained Lee. “We look forward to joining KCC and advocating together for our community and the future of this region.”

State Senator Will Espero, one of the founding members of WOEDA said, “The vision of Kapolei becoming a second city has occurred. New homes, schools, roads, and businesses have transformed West O‘ahu into a vibrant dynamic community. With the Kapolei Chamber of Commerce and WOEDA now merging, a strong unified business entity will be able to advocate and support the second city. Together, these groups will continue to be the voice and champion of the Kapolei business community. As one of the founding members of WOEDA, I look forward to a long lasting legacy which will benefit West O‘ahu and the state of Hawai‘i.”

KCC’s board of directors president Todd Bedford said, “As we look around West O‘ahu, we see the results of the nearly 20 years of dedication and hard work

WOEDA and its members have committed to advocating for jobs, economic growth and prosperity in the region. We look forward to WOEDA and its members becoming a part of the Kapolei Chamber and working together to make our community more vibrant through the support of our core initiatives.”

The New KCC in 2018

KCC has a full slate of initiatives for 2018. The most immediate is advocating for a major jobs bill during the 2018 Legislative Session:

■ **Kapolei Jobs Initiative Pilot Program:** Focus on bringing more professional, living wage jobs into the region to help keep pace with population growth in West O‘ahu. The initiative would help stimulate job growth by providing incentives for businesses to establish or open an additional location in the region. There is currently a bill being considered at the Hawai‘i State Legislature this session.

KCC’s other projects include:

■ **Hire Leeward Initiative:** In partnership with Honolulu City Councilmember Kymberly Marcos Pine, this initiative seeks to connect West O‘ahu residents with jobs closer to home that allows families to spend more time together and improves employee morale and retention. Each year, KCC sponsors an annual job and career fair. The next Hire Leeward Job and Career Fair will be held on Saturday, June 23, 2018 at UH West O‘ahu. At last year’s fair, 75 businesses and organizations participated in hopes of recruiting new workers from the more than 2,000 West O‘ahu residents who attended.

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Initiative will bring more jobs to Kapolei

KCC is championing a bill, currently at the State Legislature, that will help bring more professional jobs to Kapolei: **The Kapolei Jobs Initiative Pilot Program, HB2659 HD1**. The initiative would help stimulate job growth by providing income tax credits and unemployment insurance tax credit incentives for businesses that establish or open an additional location in the region.

HB2659 HD1 crossed over from the House to the Senate and has been referred to the Committees of Economic Development, Travel and Technology (EET) and Labor (LBR).

Help move this bill forward

A hearing must be scheduled no later than **Thursday, March 22, 2018** for the bill to move forward this legislative session.

Show your support by contacting the following legislators to request a hearing in EET and LBR be scheduled for HB2659 HD1 and that the measure move forward.

Senator Glenn Wakai
Chair, Economic Development, Travel and Technology (EET)
(808) 586-8585
senwakai@capitol.hawaii.gov

Senator Jill Tokuda
Chair, Labor (LBR)
(808) 587-7215
sentokuda@capitol.hawaii.gov



The Kapolei Chamber and WOEDA have worked in partnership on various initiatives and events including a Cybersecurity Panel event held on August 2, 2017 at Kroc Center Hawaii.

WOEDA Merges With KCC

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■ Workforce Development: KCC is working with secondary and higher education institutions to support career pathway programs including mentoring and internship opportunities for students in growth sectors including healthcare, hospitality and creative media.

■ Helping West O'ahu Businesses Thrive: Throughout the year, KCC hosts various events and programming for its members

"This is an exciting step for West O'ahu."

—Kiran Polk, Executive Director, KCC

and the community, which includes the Blue Zones Project, an initiative to promote health and wellness in the workplace, and signature events like KCC's very popular pau hana networking events. These luncheon and panel events are networking opportunities for West O'ahu businesses that keep them informed on what is happening in the region.

"I'm looking forward to welcoming WOEDA's members to the Kapolei Chamber, this is an exciting and positive step for West O'ahu," said Kiran Polk, executive director of KCC. "Together, we will work

to create an environment where businesses can grow and prosper while ensuring that this region is a great place to live, work and play."

Polk will remain the organization's executive director after the merger.

The Kapolei Chamber of Commerce (KCC) works on behalf of its approximately 300 members and the entire business community to improve the regional and state economic climate and help West O'ahu business thrive. KCC's members include proprietorships and individuals, small businesses and large corporations. For more information, visit www.kapoleichamber.com.

Lei 'O Lanikuhonua Hula Festival Celebrates Its 12th Year

On March 2, 2018, more than 250 public and private school hula students gathered for the signature day-long Lei 'O Lanikuhonua Hula Festival at Lanikuhonua, marking the free, non-competitive event's 12th year. Sponsored by the Lanikuhonua Cultural Institute at Ko Olina, the festival brought together the students with nine well-known kumu hula who shared their extensive knowledge and passion for the ancient art form. At the end of the day, the students, both male and female, gave lively performances of their dances.



This year's kumu hula included:
 Olana Ai
 Coline Aiu
 Harmony Brighter
 Nettie Armitage-Lapilio
 Twyla Mendez
 Kimo Keaulana
 Leimomi Ho
 John Aiwohi
 Pohai Souza

The participating high schools included:
 Island Pacific Academy
 James Campbell High School
 Kapolei High School
 Moanalua High School
 Nānākuli High School
 Pearl City High School
 Waipahu High School
 Wai'anae High School



KAPOLEI PROPERTIES DIVISION

Kapolei Properties Division is a division of the James Campbell Company LLC focusing on the development of the City of Kapolei, and on economic development and job creation in the Kapolei region.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON KAPOLEI, PLEASE VISIT:
www.kapolei.com or contact Steve Kelly at stevek@kapolei.com

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