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Budget priorities tweaked

Council shifts some spending while \$5.8M in cuts are left up to mayor

By **JASON ARMSTRONG**
Tribune-Herald staff writer

Despite talk about the need to cut spending, the County Council is increasing, ever so slightly, the cost of running Hawaii County government.

Lawmakers voted unanimously Wednesday to pass an amended operating budget that adds \$44,363 to Mayor Billy Kenoi's proposed \$367.3 million spending package for the fiscal year starting

July 1.

Last-minute changes were to spend \$239,363 buying police radios and allocating \$100,000 toward the cost of hiring a private consultant to review the county's property tax system.

To pay for those added expenses and still have a balanced budget,



KENOI



HOFFMANN

"I think we've done a reasonable job as far as the budget is concerned," Kohala Councilman

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the council simply boosted the fund balance, which is the amount of money the administration expects will be left over from the current operating budget.

\$1 bus fares are approved

By **JASON ARMSTRONG**
Tribune-Herald staff writer

Starting July 1, it will cost most people \$1 to ride a Hele-On bus as Hawaii County ends more than six years of free islandwide transportation.

That's the decision of the County Council, which voted 6-3 Wednesday to reverse its May 17 rejection of Mayor Billy Kenoi's fee proposal.

Kenoi still needs to sign the

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USGS

Numerous spattering sources were active on the east end of the lava lake, causing the level to fluctuate throughout the day.

Lava is rising in Pu'u 'O'o

Pool has risen hundreds of feet in crater

By **PETER SUR**
Tribune-Herald staff writer

A vast lake of molten rock, 660 feet long and half as wide across, is rising from the earth and repaving the floor of Pu'u 'O'o crater.

In other words, it's business as usual on Kilauea volcano's East Rift Zone.

"Nothing has changed," said geologist Janet Babb, after fellow scientist Tim Orr completed a helicopter flyover of the vent Wednesday.

The Kamoamoia vent stopped erupting March 9, and on March 14 lava reappeared on the floor of Pu'u 'O'o, 450 feet below the crater rim.

With no place else to go, lava began filling the crater like a bathtub. Now, a month and a half later, the floor of Pu'u 'O'o has risen to within 130 feet of the crater rim.

What happens next depends on a number of things. Babb said that the current eruptive sequence is "very similar" to what happened after the 1997

eruption of Napau Crater.

"The crater floor collapsed and over time it filled back up," Babb said. Then, new vents appeared on the flanks of the cinder cone, and the eruption continued.

"It's hard to say" whether another eruption will come out of Kamoamoia, Babb said. "There's a lot of possibilities."

Molten lava is not visible anywhere else within the East Rift Zone, including at Kalapana.

In the last week or so, sulfur dioxide emission rates from the summit vent at Halema'uma'u

have been decreasing, but rates are on the rise in the East Rift Zone. The system is still recovering from the Kamoamoia fissure eruption, said Jeff Sutton, gas geochemist at the U.S. Geological Survey's Hawaiian Volcano Observatory.

At Halema'uma'u, another lava lake persists out of view, deep within the pit on the southern end of the crater. Magma upwelling from a deep source appears here briefly before re-entering the magma system and emerging at Pu'u 'O'o.

Personnel let man freeze in S.F. Bay

Firefighters, police 'handcuffed' by policy

By **SUDHIN THANAWALA**
Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Fire crews and police could only watch after a man waded into San Francisco Bay, stood up to his neck and waited. They wanted to do something, but a policy strictly forbade them from trying to save the man in his early 50s, officials said.

A witness finally pulled the apparently suicidal man's lifeless body from the 54-degree water.

Interim Alameda Fire Chief Mike D'Orazi said Monday's incident is troubling. He has directed staff to write a new policy that would allow water rescues in the city of about 75,000 people across the bay from San Francisco.

The previous policy was implemented after budget cuts forced the department to discontinue water rescue training and stop maintaining wetsuits and other rescue gear, D'Orazi said Tuesday.

"The incident yesterday was deeply regrettable," he said. "But I can also see it from our firefighters' perspective. They're standing there wanting to do something, but they are handcuffed by policy at that point."

A witness, Perry Smith, told a television station the man was visible from the shore of Crown Memorial State Beach and was looking at people.

"We expected to see at some point that there would be a concern for him," another witness, Gary Barlow, told KGO-TV.

The Coast Guard was called to the

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Teen describes alleged assault

By **JOHN BURNETT**
Tribune-Herald staff writer

The youngest of three siblings testified Wednesday that her former stepfather molested her on at least three separate occasions.

In Hilo Circuit Court, the 17-year-old girl described two occasions in which Gary Vaughan allegedly touched her privates and another in which she said Vaughan "tried to have sex" with her.

The 57-year-old Vaughan is on trial for 10 counts of first-degree sex assault, another of attempted first-

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Ralf and Marga Hannemann are seen at the Hilo Hawaiian Hotel on Monday.



COLIN M. STEWART
Tribune-Herald

Flying Vagabonds

Flight around the world stops in Hilo

By **COLIN M. STEWART**
Tribune-Herald staff writer

After 35 years of flying together, German couple Ralf and Marga Hannemann said they experienced their most frightening moment after departing Hilo Saturday.

With weather services reporting that there would be a tail wind through all the way to the mainland, the pair loaded into their twin-

engine Vulcanair P68C, dubbed the "Geier-Flyer," and took off from Hilo International Airport. Oakland, Calif., would be their 32nd stop in an around-the-world journey to raise awareness for two charities aimed at helping children in undeveloped nations.

But five hours into the flight, the couple learned that the weather reports had been wrong. Air traffic

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VAGABONDS

From front page

controllers in San Francisco radioed that the rest of their route appeared "dicey," Marga said. After weighing their options, the pair decided to return.

Their airplane is outfitted with extra large fuel tanks, giving them about 15 hours of total flight time, with three hours of emergency reserve. But, Marga said, even with that much fuel, making the leap from Hawaii to the mainland in a small, non-pressurized plane depends on helpful weather, which they weren't getting.

"To make it, you need a good tailwind or no wind to reach the mainland," she said.

She added that nonpressurized planes like theirs aren't able to travel as high or as fast as commercial jetliners, making them much more susceptible to the weather's whimsy.

After 15 hours in the air and \$2,500 in spent fuel, the couple ended back where they'd started. It was the first major setback in their second circumnavigation of the globe.

In an interview at the Hilo Hawaiian Hotel on Monday, as they waited for the weather to clear, Marga, 61, and Ralf, 67, said they've been flying together since 1976. The parents of two grown daughters, the Hannemanns sold their possessions and their home in 2003 to purchase the Geier-Flyer, and have been self-described "vagabonds" ever since.

"He does the flying, and I do the radio and navigation," Marga said.

In 2007, the couple completed their first trip around the world, making 106 stops. The Hannemanns say they've always loved flying, and spending their retirement exploring the world just makes sense.

They've had a few close calls along the way, includ-

ing being robbed of all their money, credit cards and other possessions in South America. Then there was the time they were put into quarantine with no food or water for 40 hours on Easter Island.

"We thought we would starve," Marga said.

With unstable political situations in various places around the globe, no amount of planning can anticipate every situation. People who travel like they do must be able to improvise when needed.

For instance, Marga said, the couple's plane has no bathroom, so they must be careful not to eat or drink during their flights. But they carry a special pot for "emergencies," she said.

Finding fuel can also be hard. In the Marshall Islands, the pair had to have their fuel shipped to them in advance of their arrival. When they got there, they had to throw away about 20 gallons upon learning that the drums it had been shipped in were rusty.

While their lifestyle may sound exhausting, difficult, and more than a little crazy to most, the Hannemanns' experiences interacting with people around the world have made it all worth it.

People the world over have been accommodating and friendly, Marga said. She added that some of the friendliest people were in places the couple hadn't expected to be treated well.

"It sounds silly," she said. "We were so welcome in countries you don't expect. In Iran and Myanmar, people were so happy to see us. They ask us, 'Where are you coming from?'"

They want to take photos with you, and they invite you for dinner or lunch. They were also very interested in our charity projects."

If they've learned one thing, Marga said, it's that people may be different around the world, but all human life is fragile and should be protected.

"We traveled over the world, and we saw a lot of misery," she said. "Especially in West Africa and South America. We want to help these people."

It was that thought that led to their second trip around the world, which began in March. This time, they said, they're using the trip to call attention to the plight of children in the world's poorest nations and the work done by two charities.

Joined under the banner "A Healthy Smile Connects People," the two charities are the Mission Aviation Fellowship, or MAF, and Harle.kin.

MAF is a Christian organization whose mission is to fly in much-needed food, medicine and other supplies to developing countries. The Harle.kin project, based in Bamberg, Germany, supports premature infants and their parents.

So far, the Hannemanns have made a total of 31 stops on their journey around the world, including flights to Bulgaria, Turkey, Armenia, Iran, Pakistan, India, Myanmar, Vietnam, Thailand, China, Taiwan, The Philippines, Micronesia, the Marshall Islands, Guam and Hawaii.

They had hoped to complete their journey by June 19, but it looks like the Hannemanns will take a bit longer, they said, with four scheduled stops in the U.S., five in Canada, and a hop between Ireland and England before they return to Germany.

For more information on their journey and their charitable efforts, visit the Hannemanns' website at www.geier-flyer.com.

Affordable housing project advances

By ERIN MILLER
Stephens Media

The Kamakana Villages affordable housing development at Keahuolu isn't moving quite as quickly as anticipated, a project official said Wednesday.

"We've always been pushing to get (the first affordable homes) in by 2012," Race Rangle, manager for developer Forest City Hawaii. "That's very aggressive. Beginning of 2013 is starting to become more realistic."

The project is moving ahead, he said, and remains on budget overall.

"Unfortunately, we're probably not moving as fast as some people would like, including myself," he said.

But the developer, Forest City, which was awarded the project by the Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corp., is still keeping 2012 as a "stretch goal," Rangle added. The community's support for the project, particularly the affordable housing component, is behind the push to have the first homes, in the form of multifamily units, available next year, he said.

Hawaii County is moving faster on construction of the Ane Keohokalole Highway than Forest City officials expected, Rangle said. The county's contractor is installing Kamakana Villages' utility lines, paid for by Forest City, beneath the highway, as well as creating access points from the highway to the devel-

opment.

"They're doing such a great job they've gotten ahead of us," Rangle said. "It's best-case scenario."

Forest City got county and state approvals for the project in November. The state Land Use Commission approved amending the state land use classification for the 272-acre parcel mauka of the Ane Keohokalole Highway, from agriculture to urban. The development, at full build-out, is expected to include 1,069 affordable housing units, the majority of which will be multifamily housing.

Rangle said he'll take a preliminary subdivision plan to the county Planning Department by the end of this month. The subdivision approval plan typically takes about a year, he said. Forest City officials are evaluating proposals from contractors for the design-build construction process, with a goal of starting design this summer, he added.

The state Department of Education in early May signed off on an agreement in which Forest City will donate land for a school, as well as about \$1,600 per single-family home and \$970 per multifamily unit for school construction costs. The school is expected to be built in the third of six construction phases, Rangle said, about a decade from now.

The developer is installing a groundwater monitoring well, which should

be complete within a few weeks, and is working with Department of Water Supply officials to secure a site for a potable water source.

Getting that water source in place is driving the rest of the development schedule, Rangle said. Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corp., the state agency that focuses on affordable housing, owns a lot where a well could be located, but it is fairly far south of the project site, Rangle said. Officials are now securing a site north of Kamakana Villages, he added.

Keeping costs down while designing affordable rental units, which supporters at state and county hearings on the project said they wanted to see built, are the focus, Rangle said.

"Rental affordable housing is the hardest thing to do in development," he said. "The rents you get pay for less than half of the cost to build the thing."

Various state and federal grants and subsidies will dictate some of the project design, he added. Even factors such as which materials to use, and into which port those materials might arrive, can affect the cost.

"Do we grade the site flat and pay more for grading or leave it sloped and pay more for concrete and build steps?" Rangle asked, describing one such design question. "What remains fixed are the rents."

Email Erin Miller at emiller@westhawaii.com.

Cockfighting raid nets arrests

Five men were arrested Sunday at a cockfight in Ka'u.

Police served a search warrant shortly after noon Sunday at a macadamia nut orchard in Pahala, where the cockfight was taking place.

According to police, there were 75 vehicles and about 150 people at the site. Officers located 20 dead roosters and recovered injured roosters, rooster boxes, gaffs, cockfighting paraphernalia and gambling records. In addition, \$7,737 was seized for forfeiture.

Arrested and charged were: Patrick Takahashi, 31, of Waipahu, Oahu, with cruelty to animals, gambling and possessing gambling records; Keldon Sakata, 31, of Pahala with three counts of cruelty to animals; Donovan Mattos, 37, of Naalehu with two counts of cruelty to animals; Modesto Gonzales, 69, of Ocean View with two counts of cruelty to animals; and Edward Polido, 51, of Pahala with gambling and possessing gambling records.

Did you witness Hapuna theft?

Police are looking for witnesses to an attempted robbery at Hapuna Beach State Park on Sunday afternoon.

At about 5:15 p.m., an unidentified man tried to remove a handbag from a 56-year-old woman in the park's upper parking lot.

The suspect is described as 5-foot-10 to 5-foot-11, slim with brown hair parted in the middle and wearing a white T-shirt and shorts.

Police want to talk to a woman whom the victim made contact with after the incident and to any other witnesses in the vicinity at the time of the robbery attempt. Anyone with information is asked to call the police non-emergency line at 935-3311. Those who prefer anonymity may call Crime Stoppers at 961-8300 and may be eligible for a reward of up to \$1,000.

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