



CENTER FOR MICRONESIAN EMPOWERMENT

"THE UNTAPPED POTENTIAL OF THE MARIANAS & MICRONESIAN WORKFORCE" CONFERENCE - WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2010



The Center for Micronesian Empowerment (CME) is a private non-profit organization dedicated to empowering the underserved by providing them the skills they need to succeed on the job. In today's competitive job market, CME assists the unemployed and the underemployed by providing workforce ethics training, cultural assimilation training and job placement services.

*Join government, military and business leaders
from around the region in this one day conference.*

Leadership remarks include:

- **The Honorable Anthony Babauta**
*Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Insular Affairs,
U.S. Department of the Interior*
- **The Honorable Benigno R. Fitial**
Governor of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
- **His Excellency Emanuel Mori**
President of the Federated States of Micronesia
- **Rear Admiral Paul J. Bushong,**
Commander, Joint Region Marianas
- **Mr. David F. Bice, Major General USMC (Ret.)**
Executive Director, Joint Guam Program Office (JGPO)
- **Mr. Bryan Wood, Director,**
*United States Marine Corps - Pacific Division Plans, Policies,
Operations Department*

Date:
Wednesday,
October 20, 2010

Time:
0830-1745

Venue:
Chamorro Ballroom,
Guam Marriott Resort and Spa

Cost:
\$50.00

Seating is Limited! Register now at www.cmeguam.com or call Boots at 635-1127.
In cooperation with Hita I Marianas and Micronesia Center for A Sustainable Future.

GOLD SPONSOR:



SILVER SPONSOR:



MEDIA SPONSORS:



Forum addresses workforce for buildup

By Laura Matthews

Pacific Daily News

lmatthews@guampdn.com

Fifty years — that's the minimum amount of time the Marines will be spending on island, according to Bryan Wood, director of the Pacific Division Headquarters Marine Corps.

Wood was speaking yesterday at a workforce development conference hosted by the Center for Micronesian Empowerment and Hita I Marianas at the Guam Marriott Resort & Spa in Tumon.

The conference, titled "The Untapped Potential of the Marianas and Micronesian Workforce," brought together private employers, military officials and public policy makers to discuss shaping the economic development future of the region.

"This is how the Marine Corps looks at it. We're not here to execute next year's program. We're not here to build a base. We are here to be here for a minimum of 50 years. That's our initial outlook," Woods said. "We want to be good partners. We want to be good friends. We don't want to bring our own culture here. We want to have the Marines adopt the great culture that is Guam. That's our outlook."

About 8,600 Marines and their dependents will relocate from Okinawa to Guam. The Record of Decision, which was released last month, solidifies the actions the military will carry out on island in order to prepare for their arrival. It gives the go ahead for buildup contracts to begin and for the construction of a new military base in Finegayan, Dededo.

However, Wood said this move isn't because of a basing issue, rather an operational one. He added that operational forces will be brought to the western Pacific to provide necessary defense from those who might want to cause harm.

In building this base and preparing for the Marines, retired Marine Maj. Gen. David Bice, executive director of the Joint Guam Program Office, said employees for buildup

AT A GLANCE

▲ The Center for Micronesian Empowerment was established almost two years ago by concerned local businessmen who wanted to assist Micronesians living on Guam, in part by developing their employment skills. In this case, Micronesian refers to people from the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of Palau and the Republic of the Marshall Islands. The center strives to assist them in training and obtaining employment.

▲ By the end of this year, the center, which is a private nonprofit workforce development company, will have successfully placed 200 underserved residents from throughout Micronesia and Guam into full-time employment.

▲ Its mission is to improve the quality and quantity of workers from the region to insure that the positive economic development effects of the military buildup are realized for the residents of all of Micronesia.

Center for Micronesian Empowerment and Pacific Daily News files



Louis J. Paulino/For Pacific Daily News

Untapped potential: Retired Marine Maj. Gen. David Bice, executive director of Joint Guam Program Office, speaks at a conference held by Center for Micronesian Empowerment yesterday. The conference entitled "The Untapped Potential of the Marianas and Micronesian Workforce," was held at the Guam Marriott Resort & Spa.

TO LEARN MORE

▲ Center for Micronesian Empowerment: 969-3750

jobs will come from the local workforce first.

"We want to see local workers get first choice and we will work with contractors to ensure that they look first to Guam for their workers who are already here on island and those from neighboring island for their workforce," Bice said.

Labor demand

Bice added that this buildup will provide a labor demand unlike any other on the mainland today.

"This demand can and should be fueled by those looking for work in Guam, the Commonwealth (of Northern Mariana Islands), and throughout the Micronesia region," Bice said. "At a time when other communities across our nation see little or no hope for economic growth, the region's future is shining bright with potential."

Bice, who will leave his JGPO post at the end of the year, said military personnel earn stable pay and

INSIDE:

▲ Navy to host open house on Programmatic Agreement outlining Marine realignment plans.

Page 7

▲ Guam Humanities Council hosts community conversations aimed at discussing buildup's impacts to Chamorro identity.

Page 8

benefits in a time of global economic instability.

"This translates into a more stable income tax base, more consistent spending in the community and more consumption — meaning growth in the sectors such as retail, recreation and service industries," Bice said. "Military personnel and their families are not the only contributors. Our base functions with the help of civil servants and contractors. ... (They) will come to Guam to do business. They will spend money staying in local hotels and visiting neighboring islands to enjoy some vacation times."

These investments will bring

diversity and new industries to Guam and the CNMI to make the nation an example for new technology and innovation, Bice said.

About 4,000 workers are already on island to include locals and approximately 1,500 H-2 workers, said Capt. Peter Lynch, commanding officer of Naval Facilities Engineering Command Marianas. He said that number will increase in 2011.

"We've got the opportunity to grow the workforce here and then the opportunity to bring in the workforce from other neighboring Micronesian nations, CNMI and then we get to the H-2 workers," Lynch said.

Positive outlook

Sen. Judith Guthertz, chairwoman of the Legislature's committee on the military buildup, said she's enthused by these positive responses from the Defense Department going forward.

"I think our voices are being heard," Guthertz said adding that

she hopes no firing range will be placed in the vicinity of Pagat. She is seeking re-election. "I think we can maximize what's available. We need to train more people."

Sen. Rory Respicio, chairman of the Legislature's Committee on Micronesian Affairs, also expressed similar sentiments about the buildup tapping into the resources of the region.

"We've come a long way to come to this point where the Department of Defense is giving us the details," Respicio said. He, too, is seeking re-election. "We just have to make sure the money is in the bag before we can begin to fully embrace the military buildup."

Pacific Daily News files show that the federal government and Japan will fund \$1.3 billion in infrastructure upgrades on Guam for the military buildup. That means the island will see improvements to its power, water and wastewater systems without building any debt.

A Japan bank will transfer about \$740 million for Guam infrastructure improvements. The federal government, through the Defense Department, will fund another \$560 million, according to Pacific Daily News.

With such investments in Guam, Mike Ghigliione, executive director for the Center for Micronesian Empowerment, said it was critical these talks happen because there are fears that major construction companies will bring in off-islanders to take up all the buildup jobs.

"There's no way we can provide all the workforce, but we can provide a good percentage of it," Ghigliione said.

Anthony Babauta, assistant secretary of the Interior for Insular Affairs, said there's still an opportunity for Guam and the region to benefit.

"We are not too late as an island and as a region to participate and be proactive to empower ourselves to be able to benefit from all the opportunities from a job standpoint, an economic standpoint and even from the standpoint of being sure that our cultural heritage is intact," Babauta said.



Woman pleads guilty in rape

By Brett Kelman

Pacific Daily News

bkelman@guampdn.com

A woman arrested for holding down a 13-year-old girl while her boyfriend allegedly raped the teen entered a guilty plea yesterday, admitting to misdemeanor child abuse.

Victoria Sam, 35, is required to testify against her boyfriend, Sammy Walter, if he goes to trial. The victim is known to Sam.

ment Sam entered yesterday. The maximum sentence for misdemeanor child abuse is one year in prison, and Sam has served 14 months, so if the plea is accepted, Sukola can't sentence Sam to further prison time. If Sam doesn't testify, Sukola could reinstate more serious charges.

TO THE POINT

▲ A woman pleaded guilty yesterday to holding down a 13-year-old girl so a man could allegedly rape the teen.

"If you lie, ... they can take this plea agreement back. Do you understand that?" Sukola asked Sam.

"Yes," Sam said, staring

and serve a two-year probationary term.

Walter's case hasn't moved forward recently because, although he has met with his attorney several times, they have been unable to communicate without an interpreter. Another meeting is scheduled for Nov. 5.

According to Pacific Daily News files, Walter is accused of having sex with two young girls — a 12-year-old and the 13-year-old in Sam's case.

Walter faces charges of first-degree criminal sexual conduct as a first-degree

Accused man ordained in Chuuk

By Brett Kelman

Pacific Daily News

bkelman@guampdn.com

A man facing charges for allegedly attempting to molest a woman in 2008 recently traveled to Chuuk to be ordained as a Baptist minister.

When Stu Suda arrived in court yesterday, Superior Court of Guam Judge Anita Sukola said the defendant had recently been off island for "training" and asked him if he had successfully been ordained.

Suda said he had. According to Superior Court of Guam documents

CHARGES

Stu Suda faces these charges in the Superior Court of Guam:

- ▲ Attempted second-degree criminal sexual conduct as a first-degree felony;
- ▲ Assault with intent to commit criminal sexual conduct as a third-degree felony; and
- ▲ Two counts of fourth-degree criminal sexual conduct as a misdemeanor

Superior Court of Guam documents

the Bethel Church and returned last Thursday.

Sukola approved the travel.

In June of 2008, Suda was charged with attempted sec-

and two counts of fourth-degree criminal sexual conduct as a misdemeanor.

He hasn't gone to trial and is scheduled to return to court in January for jury selection in his case.

Suda was arrested after a woman called police on him on June 4, 2008.

The woman told police Suda allegedly started to kiss and lick her on the neck one day at work. She pushed him away, but he allegedly approached her again and grabbed her breasts with both hands, court documents state.

The woman told police Suda allegedly grabbed her

YOUR MONEY

Seminars to develop your small business

Pacific Daily News

The Guam Small Business Development Center announces the following small business seminars this month:

▲ "How to Write a Business Plan" will cover all of the elements to be included in a business plan, and explain with examples what is required in each section. The seminar runs from 8:30 to 11 a.m. Oct. 22 at Room 148 of the University of Guam's Jesus and Eugenia Leon Guerrero School of Business and Public Administration Building. Fee is \$20 per person.

▲ "How to Chart Your Financial Performance" will help you make specific changes to improve profitability based on a three-year projected income statement, strengthen financial performance based on the three-year projected balance sheet and increase the overall wealth of the business based on the company's financial ratios. The seminar is from noon to 2 p.m. Oct. 28 at the second-floor conference room of the Bank of Guam headquarters in Hagåtña. Fee is \$20 per person.

Advance sign-up and registration fee must be paid at the Guam SBDC by 5 p.m. Oct. 27.

AT A GLANCE

▲ The Pacific Island Small Business Development Center is a program supported by the U.S. Small Business Administration under a cooperative agreement.

TO REGISTER

▲ Contact Lorie Sablan or Natasha Cruz at 735-2590 or e-mail natasha@pacificsbdc.com or laurie@pacificsbdc.com.

Local business

Hutapea talks real estate today

The Rotary Club of Northern Guam announced that Siska Hutapea, managing partner at Captain, Hutapea & Associates, will be the guest speaker at its weekly membership meeting at noon today, in the Hyatt Regency Guam's Ballroom A. Hutapea's presentation will be "Current Real Estate Trends and Expected Impact from Guam Buildup."

Pacific Daily News

SBA provides record financing

Pacific Daily News

At a time when capital was scarce for small business, financing from the U.S. Small Business Administration's growth capital program increased 23 percent in fiscal year 2010, providing a record \$1.59 billion to help small businesses grow and create jobs, according to SBA Administrator Karen Mills.

The fiscal 2010 volume was the highest single-year volume in the 50-year history of SBA's Small Business Investment Company debenture program, according to an SBA press release. Increased volume in the program was in part a result of changes made by the

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, the release stated.

Those changes contributed to an increased number of new SBIC licenses, decreased license processing times, and initial capital to new funds rose dramatically.

"Across the country, there are small business owners and entre-

preneurs who are well-positioned to take that next step, grow their business and create good-paying jobs," Mills said.

The SBIC program was created to stimulate the growth of America's small businesses by supplementing the long-term debt and private-equity capital available to them, according to the release.



Empowering Micronesia

Louis J. Paulino/
For Pacific Daily News

Graduates of the Center for Micronesian Empowerment point to themselves as they are recognized at the Ypoo Beach Park yesterday. The Center aims to improve the quality of life in Micronesia as partners of the Guam Contractors Association Trades Academy.

PHOTOS ONLINE



For more photos, visit the Pacific Daily News photo gallery at www.guam.pdn.com

Centers help businesses create jobs

By Rhonda Abrams
USA TODAY

Members of Congress: If you're serious about creating jobs, take a trip to Waterbury, Conn., and get a chocolate pedicure at Sundae Spa.

Not your thing? Then check out the new software being developed by Weston Software.

Both Sundae Spa and Weston Software are creating new jobs now — with the potential to create hundreds of jobs — and they're doing it thanks to the help from Connecticut's Small Business Development Centers, one of nearly 1,000 around the country.

Take a look at the difference these centers make in just one small state.

"We work with over 400 businesses doing direct consulting for more than five hours a year, and another 700 to 800 small businesses who consult with us, and a few thousand who attend workshops," according to Ginne-Rae Clay, Connecticut state director.

As a result, just in Connecticut, the federal Small Business Admin-

GUAM SBDC

▲ Mailing address: P.O. Box 5014 Mangilao, Guam 96923

▲ Phone: (671) 735-2590

▲ Address: #148 Jesus & Eugenia Leon Guerrero, School of Business & Public Administration Building

▲ E-mail: betsy@pacificsbdc.com

getting a hefty profit for the people of Connecticut and America.

Studies show these centers bring in about \$9 for every \$1 spent.

Take a look at just two businesses the Connecticut Small Business Development Center network helped launch this year:

Sundae Spa

When Kimberly Swan became ill, she had to leave her job as a high school science teacher.

Driving one of her seven daughters to a party where the girls were getting "chocolate pedicures," Swan got her inspiration — a spa for teens and "twens" where they would create their own beauty products, have parties and fun, and oh, yes, learn about science.

But an idea isn't a business.

years, Cilley and the Connecticut center worked with Swan, so she was ready when she went looking for investors.

She was prepared and got her financing.

"We opened two weeks ago, we had 60 parties booked, and it was just phenomenal," Swan said. They've already hired 12 part-time employees, had investors from New York approach her about franchising and have 10 people waiting to discuss potential franchises.

It may become a nationwide company.

"Had I opened three years ago," Swan said, before she worked with the Cilley and the Small Business Development Center, "I would have made a lot of mistakes and wasted a lot of money."

Weston Software

Haak Voight was a software security architect for Microsoft when a start-up company recruited him.

Working for a start-up is typically a round-the-clock commitment, and one day, stuck with an eight-hour delay at an airport, Voight re-

Voight started writing code in his basement, and then he did something really smart — he reached out to the Connecticut Small Business Development Center, where he worked with counselor Kenneth Kollmeyer.

"Ken helped guide me and nurture me from an idea into my current business," Voight said. "I was amazed at the resources that were free. They gave me great help developing my business plan and fine tuning it to go after the investment community."

Voight just raised \$500,000, has hired six full-time and three part-time employees, and projects employing 50 to 100 employees in the next two to three years.

Day in and day out, all over America, counselors like Cilley and Kollmeyer help small businesses succeed.

There's almost certainly a Small Business Development Center in your town and the help is free.

So Congress members, take a drive to Connecticut or to the Small Business Development Center in your home town, and see what real-

Micronesia Fair drew thousands



Chamelle Pangelinan dances with Natibu Dance Academy during Saturday afternoon's performance at the Guam Micronesia Island Fair at Ypao Beach Park in Tumon.

By Zita Y. Taitano
zita@mvguam.com
Variety News Staff

ABOUT 20,000 people made their way through the 23rd Micronesia Island Fair since it began last week Friday until its end last night.

Representatives from Guam, the CNMI's three major islands of Rota, Tinian and Saipan, the four states of the Federated States of Micronesia — Chuuk, Yap, Kosrae, Pohnpei — the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Republic of Palau, and Fiji, participated in the

"It gave us a chance to welcome students from all grades. It was really neat to see kids learn and interact with the different vendors and cultural displays and activities that were going on. It was a great way to start the fair."

— Steve Ruder,
Micronesia Island Fair event coordinator

he was elated to see representatives from the islands come together.

"I'm much grateful to see the leadership of the region come and work together. It's all about collaboration and corrobor-

tion. I think it's great we can help each other and support each other. It's great for the region," said Walter, who is now an assistant professor of public administration at the University of Guam.

Ron Laguana, of the Department of Education's Chamorro Studies Division, is no stranger to the fair, having been part of it for the past several years.

"It's a great way to interact and learn from other cultures," he said. "We met a lot of different cultures here."

He also appreciated the presence of the performers and especially the artisans for showing off their native jewelry from all the different islands.

"They're all artistically competitive and unique in many ways," he said.

Monica Cardenas, 36, of Chalan Pago, has only been on island for two weeks and said attending the fair was a great way for her and her family to get to know the cultures of not only the Chamorros but also from the other islands.

"It's a good way to really learn," she said.

Formerly of Florida but orig-

inally from Columbia, Cardenas said she is on island with her husband Luis Lorrabal, 42, and stepson Gabriel, 14, for the next two years. Her husband works for the Guam Adventist Academy.



From left, Class President Selestine Ada and the other graduates of the Trades Academy pose for a photo during yesterday's Pohnpei Group 1 graduation ceremony at Ypao Beach Park. Photos by Matt Weiss / Variety

12 from Pohnpei graduate from local trades school

By Zita Y. Taitano
zita@mvguam.com
Variety News Staff

WHILE island residents enjoyed the entertainment and food at the Micronesia Island Fair at the Ypao Beach Park in Tumon, nearby at the Ypao Beach Amphitheater, 12 Pohnpeian men graduated yesterday afternoon from the Guam Contractors Trades Academy.

Monty McDowell, board vice chairman of the Center for Micronesia Empowerment, said the group went through core curriculum training at the academy over the past several months to learn skills in the construction trade.

"They have successfully gotten to that point where they can launch themselves into craft areas like air conditioning, electrical, masonry, carpentry and so forth," said McDowell.

The men came to Guam for the academy but first had to take assimilation classes at the Center for Micronesia Empowerment.



Pohnpei Governor John Esha addresses the new graduates.

"They're a shining example of others to follow," he said adding that the core curriculum is just the first step for them to enter into the trade they want to pursue their career in.

Present at the graduation were not only the graduates themselves but also the governor of Pohnpei, John Esha and other dignitaries.

Marianas Variety

The Local & Regional Newspaper

Guam
Edition

Vol. 06, No. 014

©2010 Marianas Variety

Thursday • October 21, 2010

www.mvguam.com

75¢

GovGuam to cash out leave credits of lawmakers

By Therese Hart
therese@mvguam.com
Variety News Staff

THE Government of Guam cashed out over \$91,000 to lawmakers during the 29th Legislature as payment for their unused leave credits, Sen. Rory Respicio disclosed yesterday.

"When the 30th Guam Legislature is replaced by the 31st on January 3, 2011, each senator and each employee of the outgoing Legislature will be entitled to receive a "lump sum" payment for their unused annual leave," said Respicio.

"This is also true for many in the administrative branch of government. Most elected officials and employees in the unclassified services of GovGuam are eligible," the lawmaker added.

Under the public law, the governor, lt. governor, senators, mayors, attorney general and public auditor are entitled to earn leave credits.

At the end of each term of office or if the official leaves office before their term is up, the established practice has been to vacate any accumulated annual leave balances as a "lump sum payment" for accrued hours, said Respicio.

Elected leaders and unclassified employees work for a length of time so they don't reach the cap of accrued annual leave.

As the law reads, govern-

Tinian may take place of Pagat

By Gemma Q. Casas
gemma.casas@mvariety.com
Variety News Staff

NORTHERN Marianas' third largest island of Tinian may have its proposed four firing ranges expanded to take the place of Guam's Pagat amid residents' strong lobby to spare it from military buildup activities because of its historical significance to the indigenous people.

Tinian Mayor Ray Dela Cruz said the military purposely

delayed plans to build the Pagat firing range because their island is being considered to host it.

"We know that they (military officials) pretty much delayed the construction of the firing range in the Pagat area in Guam. I know that there is a serious consideration in actually expanding the Tinian firing range to include the firing range in Pagat," Dela Cruz told the Variety yesterday during a session break at the day-long Center for Micronesian Empow-

erment-led conference on "The Untapped Potential of the Marianas & Micronesian Workforce" held at the Marriott.

The Record of Decision for the buildup signed on Sept. 20 states that training operations on Tinian would support up to company-level sustainment for Marine Corps forces on Guam.

"Because Guam cannot accommodate all training for the relocating Marine Corps forces, Tinian,

TINIAN continued on page 5



Outgoing Joint Guam Program Office Executive Director Retired Major General David Bice spoke about the regional employment opportunities that the military buildup on Guam would create during the day-long Center for Micronesian Empowerment-led conference on "The Untapped Potential of the Marianas & Micronesian Workforce" held yesterday at the Marriott.

» INSIDE

LOCAL

PUC FAILS TO MONITOR E911 SURCHARGES

THE Public Utilities Commission did not do its job in monitoring the proper collection of 911 emergency system surcharges as required by law elevating the risk of fraud and lost revenues, according to the Office of Public Accountability's report released yesterday.

Page 6

ENTERTAINMENT

TOM BOSLEY, MR. 'C' ON 'HAPPY DAYS,' DIES AT 83



Page 20

REPORTING

IMMEDIATE BIOPSY MAY BE UNNECESSARY

FOR breast lumps that can be felt with the fingers but look benign on ultrasound, an immediate biopsy may not be needed, particularly for some young women, researchers report.

Page 18

SPORTS

CAIN OUTDUELS HAMELS AS GIANTS WIN



Page 27

which is approximately 100 miles away and has greater land availability, provides the best opportunities for training groups of 200 Marines or larger, the next step of the training continuum," it stated.

Back pain

Northern Marianas Governor Benigno Fitial backed off from the event due to back pains, according to the mayor who was part of a small contingent who represented the commonwealth in the event that also drew participants from the nearby island nations associated with the U.S.

U.S. Department of the Interior Assistant Secretary for Insular Areas Tony Babauta, FSM President Emanuel Mori, among other dignitaries, showed up at the event.

"Unfortunately, he (Fitial) wasn't able to show up. You know, the governor is having serious back pains," the mayor said.

Fitial underwent a series of surgeries to correct his spinal stenosis — the narrowing of the cells in the spinal column which is common among the elderly.

Early this year, the U.S. Attorney's Office asked the District Court of the Northern Marianas to call for an evidentiary hearing after Fitial's masseuse, a former garment worker from China who was implicated in a foiled smuggling attempt to Guam, was taken out of the local jail to massage him in his residence.

The U.S. Marshalls was not informed before the masseuse was taken out of the jail. Local police escorted her to the governor's residence.

In a separate interview, Retired Major General David Bice, executive director of the Joint Guam Program Office,

said feasibility studies are being done to expand firing range sites not just on Tinian but on Pagan as well, an uninhabited volcanic island in the northernmost part of the CNMI.

"We're going to be building four ranges on Tinian to support the Marines. There is a follow-up study to be looking throughout the CNMI, including additional ranges on Tinian as well as potential ranges on Pagan Island or other places too," the general said in a separate interview.

"This is part of the Pacific-wide study in terms of looking at our range of alignment throughout the Pacific. It's not only the CNMI but the Pacific as well," he added.

The U.S. has military jurisdiction over the Freely Associated States which include Palau, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Marshall Islands.

The general said Route 15 is the preferred fire training range on Guam which is near the historic Pagat.

The Guam Preservation Trust nominated Pagat village to America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places which is a program of the Washington-based National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Bice said the military will soon conclude its talks about the Pagat firing range with Guam in accordance with Section 106 of the International Historic Preservation Act.

Pagat is an ancient Chamorro village, a sacred ancestral home of the indigenous people, with relics that date back to centuries ago.

The buildup involves relocating 8,600 Marines from Okinawa, Japan and their families to Guam. The first contingent is expected to be here by 2012.

Group aims to improve quality of life for Micronesians

Written by By Janela Buhain | Variety News Staff
Friday, 15 October 2010 04:18 -

A local, non-profit organization based on Guam is seeking to boost the number of Micronesians here who can participate in the growing private sector.

Opened two years ago, the Center for Micronesian Empowerment's mission is to improve the quality of life among residents of Micronesia who migrate to Guam looking for better opportunities otherwise unavailable in their areas.

"We wanted to create an organization that would assist with, what we saw at the time, the deterioration of the ability of the people in the workforce to connect with jobs," said Jay Merrill, spokesperson for CME.

In an interview with Variety, Merrill described the difficulty that exists for underserved areas in Micronesia in educating their citizens about the difference in culture on Guam from theirs.

Merrill explained in Kosrae, for instance, there exists a perception that simply educating citizens through the community college or high school system before migrating to Guam is sufficient to make themselves self-sustaining.

"Our message back was, 'no that's difficult,' and they've already experienced that because these kids that were coming had no transportation in Kosrae; had no means by which to get to class, and the investment they were making in the training programs [in Kosrae] was not working," explained Merrill.

That's when CME stepped in. The organization created a "boot camp" arrangement for Micronesian citizens migrating to Guam and, so as not to exclude those already living in Guam, a variation of the program for existing Micronesians on island.

The "boot camp" is a 90-day program in which incoming Micronesians undergo a regimented program and are provided shelter, food, transportation and uniforms and are required to adhere to a strict training schedule similar to a military boot camp.

The participants are also educated and counseled while at the program and upon graduation of the program are gradually integrated back into the community where jobs and homes are waiting for them.

CME representatives then keep track of the participants for another six to nine weeks as they assimilate into the community.

Existing migrants enroll into a separate program where they receive services that assist them with integrating successfully into the Guam community.

In the last year of operation, CME had a total of 200 participants in either program with a 95 percent success rate.

"We're not satisfied with that. I'd like it to be 101 percent," said Gerson A. Jackson, Consul General of the Federated States of Micronesia, who is also an integral part of the success of CME.

"What we're discovering in this process is that there's only so much a single organization could do so we wanted to call the community together to discuss what we think is the first major benefit associated with the military buildup. The one the community is most interested in learning about is workforce development—that means jobs," Merrill said.

Merrill said that because a migration from surrounding islands into Guam occurs regularly, the opportunity a military buildup on Guam will bring will accelerate that migration.

"If it accelerates then we have to somehow make sure that it creates a positive impact on the community. One of the most effective ways of doing that is making sure that these people coming in get integrated in the workforce—get jobs, have health insurance, have a means of taking care of their families so that they become good citizens and it helps to create that dream that remittances get sent back to their home countries and can make a difference," Merrill said.

Group aims to improve quality of life for Micronesians

Written by By Janela Buhain | Variety News Staff
Friday, 15 October 2010 04:18 -

CME is hosting a conference on Oct. 20 at the Marriott Resort Hotel with various distinguished guests from the federal, local and Micronesian communities.

Job growth and opportunities expected from buildup

Mon, Oct 25th 2010

By KENNETH V. QUINTANILLA

JOURNAL STAFF

The immediate outlook for construction job growth on Guam is impressive in terms of the number of new jobs created and the stability of wage and benefits, said Roseann Jones, University of Guam professor of economics and Journal columnist.

"Filling job demand will challenge existing labor resources on Guam, which will likely draw interest from workers with related skills in other local employment sectors," said Jones, who was among the panelists at the Center for Micronesian Empowerment and Hita I Marianas' development conference titled "The Untapped Potential of the Micronesian Workforce" on Oct.20.

"Service sector jobs as well as some professional-level jobs [such as] health care and education will likely grow as well, further challenging available labor resources. The buildup will be seen as an opportunity throughout the Marianas and Micronesia for workers to relocate to fill job demand here."

The optimistic outlook of job creation is supported by the Record of Decision, flow of construction contracts, and the decline in local job opportunities in the Northern Marianas Islands and Federated States of Micronesia.

"The CNMI is facing enormous challenges as its economy is in transition and it needs jobs," said Jay R. Merrill, chairman, Market Research and Development Inc. and moderator at the conference. "The people of the FSM are struggling because their economy continues to stutter in the hands and demise of the world economy."

He said there are potential opportunities for people region-wide that the military presence on Guam is going to create. As construction contracts and projects become better defined, the number of jobs created both directly by the military buildup and indirectly by the expected economic growth should be "forthcoming as the projects become better defined in terms of number of jobs, skill

levels and project duration," Jones said.

The Bureau of Economic Analysis has shown that the real gross domestic product is \$3.98 billion for Guam, \$0.9 billion for the NMI and \$0.3 billion for the FSM. GDP is a measure of productivity in dollar terms.

Jones said increases in GDP signify growth or an increase in economic wealth, which often translates to higher standards of living for those residing and working in the economy.

"Wealth at the macro level means more opportunity for increased salaries, wages, working conditions, and improve lifestyle with a diversity of products and services available in the market place," she added.

In a five-year average, Guam's GDP showed an increase of 1.8 % whereas NMI and FSM showed a decrease of 4.2 % and 4.8 %.

Jones said the Guam economy is directly benefiting from federal stimulus initiatives as well as from real and anticipated growth from announcements of the military buildup and the awarding of construction contracts.

"The NMI and FSM economies have not as yet realized these same opportunities, and in 2007, the effects of the loss of manufacturing in the NMI were significant on employment and revenues, which in turn resulted in negative impacts on other sectors," she said.

Capt. Peter J. Lynch, commanding officer for Naval Facilities Engineering Command Marianas said that over the next couple of years in between the time a contract is awarded and the time when "the first shovel of dirt is turned" there is a delay in place that gives an opportunity to prepare for building construction, road repair and other infrastructure improvements.

"[There will be a] three-fold increase in the amount of sustainment that we'll have to put in the ground which means we need workers to do that in the next couple of years," Lynch said. "It is not something we had anticipated when we were doing initial projects, but being a joint base does provide us with additional opportunities to sustain the existing infrastructure that we have in place.

"[In the next five years] it's going to be a big increase, and that takes into the account the moderate buildup that we're doing now. We have workers on island today which includes the folks that are from Guam that are trained here and are journeymen," Lynch said. MBJ