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Governor Lemanu Presents Key Highlights from the 2024 State of the Territory Report



Today, Governor Lemanu addressed the Fono as he released the 2024 State of the Territory report during the 38th Legislature's 3rd regular session, highlighting the collective achievements and commitments that have shaped American Samoa's progress and resilience. The report emphasizes the crucial roles of education, security, healthcare and economy as foundational pillars for the territory's welfare. It delves into the government's dedicated efforts and initiatives to address evolving community needs, fostering a promising and inclusive future.

In his address, Governor Lema'u stated, "The real and present threat posed by climate change is evident in the events that have unfolded within our shores." He continued, "From the devastating impact of rising sea levels to the seismic activity stemming from volcanic events, our community has witnessed firsthand the urgency of addressing the challenges posed by our changing climate. We must not only fortify our communities against these threats but also embark on a journey towards building sustainable economies and resilient infrastructure. Our commitment to climate resilience is not merely a response to crises but an investment in our collective future."

Governor Lema'u referenced his visit in Hawaii as he met with U.S. Army Corp of Engineers to discuss the threatening effects of climate change to American Samoa ([Governor Lema'u and U.S. Army Corp of Engineers Discusses Path Forward](#)). Since then, the Lema'u-Talauega administration through the Resilience Commission, Food Security and Safety Council, have worked aggressively to combat climate change issues. This includes new seawalls constructed in the villages of Asili, Nua and Seetaga, and roadside drainage projects in Sailele Road. It is the belief of this administration that developing infrastructure that withstands the forces of nature and building sustainable economies, it not only protects the residents of American Samoa, but also equip them with the tools to seize future economic opportunities.

The local economy continues to be resilient and thriving. A 2023 analysis from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) reported American Samoa experienced a 1.8 percent growth in real gross domestic product (GDP) in 2022, rebounding from a 0.8 percent decline in 2021. The rise in real GDP can be attributed to heightened government spending and export activities. "The federal aids to fund startup and ongoing projects in our economy is producing a positive impact to our revenue streams," remarked Governor Lema'u. He continued, "These catalysts continue to sustain and provide stability to our economy. Approximately 3,548 business licenses were registered at the Revenue Branch of the American Samoa Department of Treasury."

To date, the local fund preliminary FY2023 4th quarter YTD expenditures amounted to approximately **\$162.2** million versus the budget of **\$125.3** million; thus leaving **\$36.9** million in the deficit mostly to defray costs incurred on projects to improve our community. As strong collection trends continue, the current YTD estimated expenditures for 1st quarter of FY2024 amount to about \$40 million. Overall, projected spending for FY2024 to meet government operations is expected to be around \$160 million.

Under the Lema'u-Talauega administration, American Samoa has witnessed the completion and ground-breaking of nearly 100 transformative infrastructure projects on the landscape of our Territory. Numerous residential and access roads now crisscross the islands, connecting communities and instilling a sense of unity. Families are already enjoying the benefits of completed road projects spanning from Lailii through Alofa'u, Taputimu through Leone, and the Nu'uuli Airport Intersection for example making daily commutes shorter, smoother, and cleaner

while reducing the wear-and-tear on vehicles. The administration continues to improve infrastructure to schools such as Leone Midkiff Elementary, Pavaiai Elementary, and Aunuu Elementary where students will enjoy new classrooms and renovated cafeterias, providing an environment conducive to learning and growth.

These improved infrastructure enhances accessibility to essential services, promotes economic growth, and bolsters the interconnectedness of our communities. Beyond their functional purposes, they create spaces where families can gather – providing an outlet for physical activities that positively impacts mental health and well-being.

To conclude, Governor Lemanu addresses critical issues in Swains Island, acknowledging its transportation, medical and social needs. Residents of Swains Island have migrated to seek better living conditions in Tutuila. Alike Manu'a residents, many have migrated to Tutuila for better working and living conditions. In their efforts of inclusivity and responsiveness, the Lemanu-Talauega administration is working towards better addressing these issues by partnering with Pago Wings. This allows accessible travel to provide continuity of services to the residents of Manu'a.

To read more of the successes under the Lemanu-Talauega administration, you can access the 2024 State of the Territory Comprehensive Report at americansamoa.gov.

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