



MAYOR'S Highlights

SEPTEMBER 2023

Rick Blangiardi



Photos Courtesy Governor Josh Green/Flickr

This Month's Highlights

- Lahaina Wildfire Response Efforts
- West O'ahu's Expanded Lifeguard Coverage
- The Liquor Commission's New Administrator
- Fulfilling an 'Ewa Plains Promise
- Forbes' Awesome Award for the City
- A Blaisdell Legend Retires

Lahaina Strong

A Message From Mayor Rick Blangiardi

Like all of you, my wife Karen and I were devastated to learn of the destructive force of the wildfires on Maui that destroyed so much of Lahaina and claimed the lives of so many loved ones, friends and neighbors. We mourn for the people of the Valley Isle, but your strength and resilience in the face of such a tragic event has been truly inspiring — my sincere hope is that as time goes on, healing and recovery will gradually ease the pain many of you are experiencing.

This disaster has left many residents displaced and in dire need of help, but the aloha spirit shines brightest when we come together as one 'ohana to support those in need. If you can, please consider donating to organizations like the Hawai'i Community Foundation, the Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement, or the Maui Food Bank. You can also scan the QR code on this page to learn more about different ways to help our Maui neighbors who need it most.

Over the past several weeks, I have been encouraged by the fact that for every story of heartache and loss it seems we hear another of heroism and selflessness. I watched in awe as firefighters recounted how they continued to battle the fires in Lahaina, even as their own homes burned, and as ship captains explained how they pulled people from the harbor who had fled into the water to avoid the flames. In countless cases, first responders displayed the very definition of bravery.

In this moment of reflection, I also want to take an opportunity to thank the many members of our City and County of Honolulu 'ohana who deployed to Maui to assist with emergency response efforts — I am deeply proud of your dedication and compassion, and I know that you made a meaningful difference in the lives of our Maui brothers and sisters in their hour of greatest need.

40 members of the Honolulu Fire Department — including Honolulu Fire Chief Sheldon Hao, who was born and raised on Maui — headed to Maui in the days after the Lahaina fire to assist in both firefighting and search-and-rescue efforts. The Honolulu Police Department sent over detectives, telecommunications specialists and peer-to-peer counselors to support the Maui Police Department in any way possible. The director of Honolulu's Department of Emergency Management, Hiro Toiya, sent

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HOW TO HELP



Information, resources, and support to help those in need during these challenging times.

<https://www.mauinuistrong.info/support>

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multiple people to support the Maui Emergency Operations Center — the county’s headquarters for wildfire response efforts.

As Mayor, I want to assure those of you with friends and family on the Valley Isle that our team at the City and County of Honolulu stands in solidarity with Mayor Richard Bissen and the people of Maui during this difficult time. We are committed to supporting disaster relief efforts in any and every way possible, for as long as it takes to begin the rebuilding process.

Let us stand united with the people of Lahaina during this time of need and continue to shine as a beacon of hope for all of Hawai’i.

– Mayor Rick Blangiardi



Lifeguards On Watch at Kahe Point

For the first time in 11 years, a new shoreline area on O’ahu is under the watchful eye of Honolulu Ocean Safety lifeguards.

On August 3, the City and County of Honolulu unveiled a brand new lifeguard tower at Kahe Point Beach Park, also known as Electric Beach. Ocean Safety began staffing the new tower almost immediately after it was installed, and lifeguards made their first rescue just hours after it opened, when two people got into trouble in waters just offshore of the beach park.

The installation of the new lifeguard tower at Kahe Point Beach Park expands the number of Ocean Safety towers across the island to 42. To see the full list of City and County of Honolulu shoreline parks with lifeguard towers, as well as a map showing other beach access locations, scan the QR code below.

“Our lifeguards provide a watchful eye over the shorelines across O’ahu, and they are some of the best watermen and women in the world. We are thrilled to be able to expand their ability to keep beachgoers safe to a new location on the Wai’anae Coast,” said Mayor Rick Blangiardi.

In the coming weeks, Ocean Safety plans to replace four older towers already in use across O’ahu with the new model that was installed at Kahe Point Beach Park. An order for six additional towers will also be placed later this year.



LIFEGUARD TOWER MAP



Revamping Varona Village

A promise decades in the making, Varona Village in ‘Ewa Beach is now set for transformative change. In a press conference on August 22, Mayor Blangiardi announced that the City and County of Honolulu will be turning over the land to developers Peter Savio and Hawai’i Habitat for Humanity so that they can redevelop the historic village on O’ahu’s ‘Ewa Plain.

The project, long awaited by residents, will help breathe new life into the former plantation community. Varona Village’s redevelopment envisions a harmonious blend of modern infrastructure and the preservation of the area’s immense cultural heritage.

The redevelopment will happen in two phases: Phase I will consist of the repair and renovation of approximately 40 existing homes that are still in good condition, and Phase II will involve new construction for as many as 88 new homes, plus a brand-new community center. This effort aims to enhance the quality of life for current residents and their families, offering improved housing, green spaces, and modern amenities.

The developer has already engaged with the community on the redevelopment efforts, which includes financial counseling designed to help put tenants in a position to finance the repairs to, renovations of or acquisitions of homes.



Park Maps Unveiling (Wai'alae) July 31, 2023

Looking for the nearest playground for your keiki to enjoy, or a fitness station to break a sweat? Mayor Blangiardi helped launch a new interactive park map to better connect residents with the City's recreational resources!

Hiroshima, Nagasaki Memorial Ceremonies (Downtown Honolulu) August 7 & 8, 2023

Mayor Blangiardi marked the solemn 78th anniversary of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by attending separate vigils in Downtown Honolulu, paying tribute to those who died and echoing the calls for peace and prosperity between our two nations.



AYSO Championship Visit (Honolulu Hale) August 8, 2023

A long-time supporter of youth sports in Hawai'i, Mayor Blangiardi honored the FC Hawai'i 09 soccer team at Honolulu Hale after their national championship victory at the U14 U.S. Youth Soccer tournament in Orlando — where they became the first female team from Hawai'i to win a national title.



Liberation Day Celebration (Makiki) August 15, 2023

Mayor Blangiardi joined the United Korean Association of Hawai'i in celebrating the 120th anniversary of Korean immigration to the islands and recognizing the 70th anniversary of the US/ROK alliance.

19th Annual Korean Festival (Frank F. Fasi Civic Grounds) August 19, 2023

Kimchi, cultural performances and K-pop ruled the day as more than 30,000 attendees headed to one of the most popular cultural festivals on the island. A portion of the scrip sales from this year's event went to support victims impacted by the wildfires on Maui.



Chinatown Cleanup (Chinatown) August 26, 2023

Nearly 100 City and County of Honolulu employees joined Mayor Blangiardi for the annual Chinese Chamber of Commerce of Hawai'i cleanup across Chinatown. Volunteers picked up trash, scraped off graffiti and repainted several areas in need of some "TLC" from the community!





Three Questions with Sal Petilos

In early August, the Honolulu Liquor Commission voted to retain the expert services of Salvador (Sal) Petilos, a long-time industry leader, as the Liquor Commission's next administrator. This is a critical position, and Sal's years of hands-on experience will be invaluable to the current situation and the challenges facing the agency.

Petilos received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from Rutgers University and a Juris Doctor degree from Fordham Law School. He is a former member of the New York and New Jersey Bars (retired).

About You

"I'm a dad, skier, guitar collector and surfer noob — if that! I served approximately 25 years in Utah state government, including more than 12 years in senior management positions. My last 8 1/2 years prior to retirement were spent as the director of Utah's Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control."

Top Priorities

"I know as well as anyone there is much work to be done! We'll start with a thorough review of agency operations, including ways to improve recruitment, enhance employee development, and conduct more effective community outreach."

Vision for the Commission

"I want to help build an agency that the people of O'ahu can have confidence in as a regulatory agency that treats its licensees in an equitable manner through consistent interpretation and application of rules and regulations."

Best of the Best... Again!

For the third year in a row, Forbes has ranked the City and County of Honolulu among America's Best Employers in each state, rating us as the third-best employer in Hawai'i — and, once again, the top employer in the state for government services.

These results were earned by the hard-working men and women of the City and County of Honolulu, and over the next few months we will continue to introduce you to some of our dedicated employees — including Henry Gabriel, who works as the acting assistant refuse division chief for the Department of Environmental Services. As he explains it: "It's not even a job to me, it's a passion for me."



Scan the QR code to explore exciting career opportunities with the City and County of Honolulu!
<https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/honolulu>



Mahalo, Mary!

You may not recognize her face, but for more than 30 years, Mary Lewis has championed Hawai'i's largest entertainment complex — including both the Neal S. Blaisdell Center and the Tom Moffatt Waikiki Shell — serving more than 700,000 guests each year.

As the administrator for both facilities, Mary has tirelessly nurtured O'ahu's arts, cultural and business communities, developing trust

with clients big and small to increase the number and variety of events at City facilities. She has a highly creative approach to the business of entertainment, and her talents will be missed as she embraces retirement!

For years, Mary has worked with her team to engage with local, national and international clients to provide Hawai'i with a wide range of entertainment, athletic, expo, cultural and educational events.

During the pandemic, Mary pivoted from events to offering vaccination clinics and testing sites. She then championed a \$3.05M federal grant award to support Honolulu's economic recovery and encouraged the safe reopening of venues to large touring acts, including Broadway productions, to secure revenue streams. Mary culminates her career spearheading a \$50 million renovation of the Blaisdell campus — continuing her legacy of creating positive and lasting memories for the people of our island.

We bid Mary a heartfelt congratulations and a warm *a hui hou* as she takes her last bow with the City!

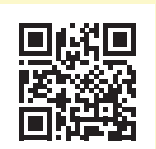
Report An Issue

Have an issue in your community? Report anything, from potholes to graffiti, using the City's 311 program — available now via mobile app or <http://www.honoluluhi.citysourced.com>



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