



The Pacific Tradewinds Quarterly

Latest Newsletter Release

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SOPAC Announces a New Joint Electronic Newsletter Partnering PI-GOOS, PI-GCOS and Pacific HYCOS

Tuesday, December 11, 2007

By Paul Eastwood

Announcing the release of the first issue of Vai Pasifika, the joint electronic newsletter of the Pacific Islands Global Ocean Observing System (PI-GOOS), the Pacific Islands Global Climate Observing System (PI-GCOS) and the Pacific Hydrological Cycle Observing System (Pacific HYCOS). The newsletter will be distributed quarterly by email and will contain news and articles from all three observing programmes. An electronic copy of the newsletter will also be available for download from the SOPAC website at [http://](http://www.sopac.org/Vai+Pasifika)

www.sopac.org/Vai+Pasifika. To subscribe or unsubscribe to Vai Pasifika please send an email to vai.pasifika@sopac.org with either 'Subscribe to Vai Pasifika' or 'Unsubscribe to Vai Pasifika' in the subject line.

Vai Pasifika is produced jointly by SOPAC (Secretariat of the Pacific Islands Applied Geoscience Commission, www.sopac.org) based in Suva, Fiji, and SPREP (Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme, www.sprep.org) based in Apia, Samoa. Vai (or Wai) means 'water' in many of the languages spoken in the Pacific islands, and provides a connecting theme to all three observing programmes.



Renewable Energy Brings Fiji Power Bills Down



Wind Farm in Weatherford, Oklahoma USA.

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/marvinok/440210529/>

Wednesday, December 12, 2007

SUVA, Fiji - Despite escalating world fuel prices, Fiji consumers can expect lower power bills from next week due to the reduction in fuel surcharge.

Competition regulator, the Commerce Commission, today announced the reduction in fuel surcharge from 3.23 cents per unit to 2.83 cents per unit to be implemented on December 20.

Commission chairman Charles Sweeney said the reduction results from the improved Monasavu hydro performance, diesel (IDO) substitution with heavy fuel

oil, increasing contribution from renewable energy projects (most recently the Butoni wind farm) and improving thermal generation efficiencies.

On November 1 this year, the Commerce Commission had implemented the increased surcharge rate from 1.88 cents to 3.23 cents per unit.

The Commission said the major factor in the decision to increase rates then was the rapid rise in world fuel price.

Fijilive: <http://www.fijilive.com>
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Pacific Island Report

<http://pidp.eastwestcenter.org/pireport/2007/December/12-12-10.htm>

Japan to Fund \$40 Million Samoa Solar Power Project

Thursday, December 13, 2007

WELLINGTON, New Zealand – The Samoa Electric Power Corporation says the first phase of its solar photovoltaic cell project is now underway.

The Electric Power Corporation says households in areas, which have no access to a power supply, are now being registered under the project.

Most of people in the country get power from diesel generators or the one main hydropower plant on Upolu Island.

[PIR editor's note: Upolu is one of the two largest islands in Samoa,

and site of the national capital of Apia.]

The program is run as partnership between the Electric Power Corporation, the government, the United Nations Development Program and SOPAC.

This week, the Samoan Prime Minister signed an agreement with the government of Japan for a US\$40 million soft loan from the Asian Development Bank to fund the new power project.

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Pacific Island Report

<http://pidp.eastwestcenter.org/pireport/2007/December/12-13-17.htm>

"...households in areas, which have no access to a power supply, are now being registered under the project," RNZI.

Papua New Guinea Gold Mine to Study Geothermal Development

Monday, October 29, 2007

PORT MORESBY, Papua New Guinea - Geothermal energy development for PNG has a great prospect as an environment friendly source of alternative power says Karl Yalo, managing director of Bismarck Energy Limited.

Mr. Yalo said geothermal energy had proven to be not only cost efficient and effective as against the fossil fuel, but advantageous in respect of zero emissions and minimal land impact.

He made these observations after an agreement was signed between Sustainable Energy Limited, Bismarck Energy and New Guinea Gold for feasibility studies to be carried out on the potential of a geothermal power station at the Sinivit gold mine in East New Britain. "Geothermal energy development in PNG has great prospects only on the proviso that serious and sustained investment is made in a political environment that is conducive to such investments," Yalo said.

He said the Government should seriously consider supporting geothermal development as a catalyst to cutting down on fossil fuel emissions. "With the crude oil price now trading at a record US\$90 [PGK262] per barrel, there is no price relief in sight. I believe fossil fuel prices will not come down. The end result is countries like PNG whose economies de-

pend entirely on fossil fuel will continue to face economic hardship particularly in rural communities," he added.

New Guinea Gold Ltd director Ceselewago backed Yalo, saying geothermal energy had a great potential to be fully developed in the country. "It is incumbent upon the wider global community and government to set the necessary framework to facilitate development of newer and cleaner energy sources for our people, the economy and thereby helping reduce greenhouse emissions which is contributing significantly to environment degradation and climate change. The effects of this phenomenon are already upon us here in PNG," Mr. Ceselewago said.

Mining company Lihir Gold Limited became the first company in Papua New Guinea to use geothermal energy and this has also helped the company to make savings on yearly fuel costs.

Ceselewago said that the use of cheap energy could trigger other cost saving initiatives for New Guinea Gold Corporation at their Sinivit mine. Bismarck Energy will construct the geothermal power plant and sell electricity to NGC.

Papua New Guinea Post-Courier:

www.postcourier.com.pg/ Copyright © 2007 PNG Post-Courier. All Rights Reserved

Pacific Island Report

<http://pidp.eastwestcenter.org/pireport/2007/October/10-30-16.htm>

"...the Government should seriously consider supporting geothermal development as a catalyst to cutting down on fossil fuel emissions," Yalo.

Severe Drought Threatens Thousands in Kiribati

"...last rain received for the South islands is during March of this year..."
Moreti Tibiriano.

Friday, November 9, 2007

WELLINGTON, New Zealand – Thousands of people in Kiribati's southern atolls are suffering from a severe drought as the country is experiencing the dry El Nino weather pattern.

The Met Office says limited water storage on small islands means that domestic water supplies are severely threatened.

The head of Kiribati's met office, Moreti Tibiriano, says the southern atolls have not had rain for months.

"According to our records the last

rain received for the Southern islands is during March this year. Most of the people on the Southern Islands are relying on well water only. I understand that's the biggest issue to the Southern Islands now is the water, most of the villages there is affected."

Moreti Tibiriano says a third of Kiribati's 107,000 population live in the southern atolls.

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Pacific Island Report

<http://pidp.eastwestcenter.org/pireport/2007/November/11-09-05.htm>

Palau To Receive \$3.9 Million Energy Grant

Monday, November 5, 2007

By Nazario Rodriguez Jr.

KOROR, Palau — The Government recently signed with the European Union (EU) a grant of 2.7 million Euros [US\$3.9 million] that would fund renewable and sustainable alternative energy projects in Palau.

Minister of State Temmy Shmull signed the partnership agreement on behalf of President Remengesau during the 38th Pacific Islands Forum in mid October at the Capital town of Naku'alofa, Kingdom of Tonga.

The MOS said in a press release on Tuesday Oct. 30 that 85 per-

cent of the grant would be used to establish a Technical Cooperation Facility where further research on European Development Fund (EDF) activities will be funded.

This funding cycle will run from 2008 to 2013.

MOS said that the agreement called "the Country Strategy Paper and National Indicative Program between Palau and the European Community is in line with Palau's National Development Plan and consistent with the promotion of the economic and social development of the nation.

MOS also said that funding is allocated through the 10th EDF



An offshore wind farm.

<http://www.mms.gov/Assets/Photos/ForHomePage/200/200OffshoreWindFarm.jpg>

whose purpose is to maximize the contribution of appropriate, proven and cost effective renewable technologies.

"One of the greatest challenges facing Palau's future development as a nation is the high cost of fossil fuels. This grant will help the Republic to reduce our reliance on foreign fuel by improving efficiency, encouraging energy conservation, invest in renewable technologies and implement sustainable energy strategies," said Shmull.

Shmull thanked the European Community's EDF Program and the EU member states for their assistance.

MOS said that the EDF is the main funding mechanism for providing aid for development cooperation in the African, Asian and the Pacific Countries and funded by the EU member states and its management and financial oversight are conducted by an independent committee.

A large portion of the budget is dedicated to regional programs, focusing on the importance of economic integration as the basic framework for national and community development.

MOS said that the creation of incentive amounts for each country is an innovation in the 10th EDF.

The signing of the ACP-EU Partnership Agreement in Cotonou in June 2000 brought the number of the Pacific ACP countries from eight to 14. These included the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, the Cook Islands and Niue.

As signatories to the Cotonou Agreement, these 14 PACP states are entitled to a number of trade and advantages in their EU relations.

Marianas Variety: www.mvariety.com

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Pacific Island Report

<http://pidp.eastwestcenter.org/pireport/2007/November/11-05-16.htm>



"One of the greatest challenges facing Palau's future development as a nation is the high cost of fossil fuels..."
Shmull.



Marianas Drivers Shift to Fuel Efficient Cars

Wednesday, November 21, 2007

By Mark Rabago

SAIPAN, CNMI – The steady increase in fuel prices is forcing local car buyers in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands to opt for more fuel-efficient vehicles instead of gas-guzzlers, according to the Commonwealth Auto Dealers Association.

However, the high cost of gaso-

line is not the lone factor influencing customers in their car choices; the high billings of the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. are also affecting car-buying habits, according to Commonwealth Auto Dealers Association secretary Doug Brennan.

"The continuing rise in the cost of gasoline and record-breaking Commonwealth Utilities Corp. billings have pushed customers toward more fuel-efficient vehicles,"



“The continuing rise in the cost of gasoline and record-breaking Commonwealth Utilities Corp. billings have pushed customers toward more fuel-efficient vehicles,” Doug Brennan.

he said, adding that it has become more difficult to sell vehicles with V6 engines and almost impossible to sell a vehicle with a V8 engine.

In a quick review of sales from 2004 through October 2007, Brennan said it is quite evident that the demand for larger engines has fallen off.

Vehicles such as the Nissan Titan, Toyota Tundra, and Nissan Armada come with optional V8 engines.

Brennan said sales of these vehicles were at 23 units in 2004, 19 units in 2005, and down to nine units in 2006. Year-to-date data (from January to October 2007) shows that only two V8 units have so far been sold Commonwealth-wide.

“That is not to say that all V8 models are undesirable. Sales of Ford and Chevy 15 passenger vans have remained steady. In today's market, a vehicle with an engine that large would be purchased as a business asset,” said

Brennan.

Shell Marianas raised pump prices last Nov. 16, a mere two weeks after the company increased its fuel prices by 10 cents on Saipan. Shell increased pump prices for regular, premium unleaded, and diesel by 8 cents a gallon.

With the increase, Shell's price for regular self-service gas is now at US\$3.769 a gallon, while premium gas is now at US\$3.959 a gallon. For full service, Shell's price for regular is now at US\$3.899, while premium is at US\$4.079.

Mobil Oil Mariana Islands Inc. also increased their retail fuel prices last Nov. 12 by 8 cents. Mobil, however, also decreased their fuel prices by 8 cents four days later. The two companies' prices were the same as of yesterday.

Saipan Tribune

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Pacific Island Report

<http://pidp.eastwestcenter.org/pireport/2007/November/11-21-14.htm>

Eagle Rays Disappearing from Saipan Dive Spot

Tuesday, November 6, 2007

By Marconi Calindas

SAIPAN, CNMI – A diving enthusiast and official of [Marianas Dive](#) is raising concern over the apparent decline in the number of eagle rays populating the waters around the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Marianas Dive president Mike Tripp said the number of eagle

rays at famous dive spots on Saipan such as the Ice Cream and Eagle Ray City have decreased dramatically.

In an interview yesterday with Tripp, he said several diving groups have noticed that the eagle rays, a sub-family of sting-rays, are now just a handful compared to previous years.

Tripp said that during his filming



of a diving video for the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands two years ago, he observed around 30 to 35 eagle rays swimming near the dive sites. Some Japanese divers, however, have told him that over five years ago the eagle rays' number was close to 100.

In his latest dive, Tripp said he only saw about six or seven.

He said several factors might have contributed to the decline in the sea creature's number. He said some divers have witnessed some eagle rays' carcasses being washed ashore with spears stuck to their bodies. Some divers also witnessed some boats circling the Eagle Ray City and Ice Cream dive sites.

Tripp said he is worried about the decline in the eagle ray population because in other islands such as the Grand Caymans, stingrays are one of the sources of income for the island's economy. At least US\$9 million are being generated at Cayman Islands from the thousands of tourists visiting the island to dive and witness the stingrays swimming in the island's waters.

He said the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands has the same attraction and getting even just 10 percent of what the Cayman Islands earns would contribute a lot to the local economy. "If we lose them we lose one of the natural wonders we have here."

Tripp recently received a letter from a diving magazine, saying the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands has a rare diving site where divers could swim with eagle rays near the is-

land's shores. The letter sender said the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands could use this advantage to attract more tourists.

Other causes in the decline of the eagle ray population remain a mystery to Tripp, who said there seems to be no cultural basis for it.

He said an Australian specialist informed him that the gestation period for eagle rays takes a long time, thus losing large numbers of the species would mean a longer recovery period to rejuvenate the eagle rays' population.

Right now, a bill that regulates the feeding of sharks and protection of eagle rays sits at the Legislature.

Tripp said his group is hoping that the bill would finally pass the Senate after being given back to the House for revisions. He said it's been two months now since the Senate unanimously voted to approve the bill.

"We need to educate people about it [the protection of the eagle rays]," Tripp said.

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<http://pidp.eastwestcenter.org/pireport/2007/November/11-06-19.htm>



Eagle Ray City in Saipan of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

www.talaythai.com

6.7 Quake Rocks Papua New Guinea Province

Tuesday, November 27, 2007

PORT MORESBY, Papua New Guinea - Several houses were damaged and water tanks knocked over at Wasu and Kabwum stations when an earthquake shook Morobe Province on Thursday evening.

Initial reports from the remote Wasu, Sialum and Kabwum areas, where the quake measuring 6.7 on the Richter scale was centered, said the whole area was badly shaken, but there were no immediate reports of casualties.

Reports also said several houses along the coast were washed away by waves that were caused by the tremor.

The Wasu health centre also suffered severe damage and at the Kabwum district station the water tank was damaged. The Derim health center, also in Kabwum, lost its septic toilet which sank into the ground.

Landslides were reported in other villages in the area.

In Lae City, at Three to Four Mile settlements several houses also collapsed as a result of the shake.

The provincial disaster office said it would continue to monitor the situation by VHF radio, and that there was no immediate need to send out an inspection team.

Meanwhile, several fund raising drives swung into action at the weekend, including one by the people of Oro living and working in Lae.

They held a "wheel barrow push" throughout the city to raise funds to help the flood hit people in Oro.

Relief supplies donated by companies and other organizations were shipped to Buna to be taken to the affected people.

A kind gesture was also shown by Team Central at the PNG Games, who donated PGK850 [US\$315] that the team was given by National Youth Commission as a prize, to the affected people at Oro.

Papua New Guinea Post-Courier:

www.postcourier.com.pg/

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<http://pidp.eastwestcenter.org/pireport/2007/November/11-27-06.htm>

"They had a 'wheel barrow push' throughout the city to raise funds to help the flood hit people in Oro," Papua New Guinea Post-Courier.



Map of Papua New Guinea Provinces. The earthquake occurred in the Morobe Province located in the center of the map.

www.budgettours.com.pg/Provinces

Fiji Hydro Power Project Wins New Zealand Award

Friday, November 23, 2007

SUVA, Fiji – The first major renewable energy project to be built in Fiji for over 25 years was announced a winner at the New Zealand Engineering Excellence Awards at TePapa in Wellington last night.

Scoop.co reports that the Wainikasou power project, completed by MWH NZ Limited, won the Electrical & Systems category.

The new run-of-river hydroelectric scheme was built in the jungle clad highlands of central Viti Levu, Fiji.

According to Scoop.co, the scheme required an innovative approach to design and construction to overcome the challenges of a remote location, rough access roads, high rainfall and a total lack of mains electricity, telephone and internet facilities.

"The scheme, though not large by

New Zealand standards, demonstrates how careful planning, design and implementation can deliver a valuable project on time and to budget, despite adverse conditions", said David Elms Dist-FIPENZ, Convenor of the Category Awards judging panel.

The third New Zealand Engineering Excellence Awards are the premier awards for New Zealand engineering professionals.

The awards are presented in two major areas: Individual Awards, that recognise leadership, entrepreneurship, and our young engineers; and Category Awards, that recognise achievement in the various industry areas, together with a Supreme Award for the best of the Category winners.

Fijilive

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<http://pidp.eastwestcenter.org/pireport/2007/November/11-23-07.htm>

“... the scheme required an innovative approach to design and construction to overcome the challenges of a remote location...”
Scoop.co

World's Biggest Butterfly Threatened in Papua New Guinea

Friday, October 26, 2007

PORT MORESBY, Papua New Guinea - The provincial wildlife and conservation officer from the Oro province is concerned over the habitat of the largest butterfly in the world - the Queen Alexandra butterfly.

Reason: It is under threat as

communities turn to economical initiatives in place of conservation.

Eddie Malaisa raised this concern yesterday in an open forum discussing conservation communities.

He told participants of the conference on nature conservation and

protected areas of the need to protect the habitat of the largest butterfly but at the same time look after the needs of the communities involved in conservation.

In an interview later, Mr. Malaisa said so far seven conservation habitats have been lost because the landowners had turned to commercial farming of oil palm and other crops for their economic livelihood.

"There is an urgent need for governments to recognize the landowners in conservation areas like Oro province where the largest butterfly in the world lives. There is a need to link the communities with governments so such people are recognized for their efforts in conservation and that they are rewarded financially to sustain their living," Malaisa said.

The National: www.national.com.pg/

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Pacific Island Report
<http://pidp.eastwestcenter.org/pireport/2007/October/10-26-05.htm>



Papua New Guinea's Oro Province, home to the world's biggest butterfly - the Queen Alexandra - is raising concern over threats to the butterfly's habitat as development in the province increases.

Toptropicals.com

Campaign to Protect Whales Launched in Pacific

Friday, November 16, 2007

WELLINGTON, New Zealand - "Ordinary people" throughout the Pacific are being encouraged to help save the whales by putting pressure on authorities to ban their slaughter.

A big campaign to protect Pacific humpback whales has been launched in a response to the Japanese government saying it'll hunt 50 humpback whales a year as part of its "Scientific program."

The chair of the Tongan Advisory Council, Melino Maka, says Pacific

leaders are behind the campaign, along with the International Fund for Animal Welfare.

Maka says whale watching is becoming the region's most profitable industry and Pacific People need to wake up to the advantages.

The campaign kicks off next year and will be fronted by local rugby hero, Jonah Lomu.

NiuFM

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Pacific Island Report

<http://pidp.eastwestcenter.org/pireport/2007/November/11-16-19.htm>

"...whale watching is becoming the region's most profitable industry..."
Melino Maka.



Classroom Weather Focus

Mountain Ranges and Climate

OBJECTIVES:

1. When new mountains rise, the climate in an area changes.
2. Desert conditions can be caused by the uplift of a mountain range because that barrier blocks off rain.
3. Geographical change in an area causes changes in the animal and plant life of the area.

MATERIALS:

Glass baking dish, rocks, paper cup, food coloring, measuring cup, hot water, and room temp water

PROCEDURE:

1. Divide your class into groups. Have each group create a "mountain range" by arranging the rocks in the center of the bottom of the dish.
2. Instruct students to use a pencil point to poke 10 holes in the sides of the paper cup, and then tape the cup into a corner of the container.
3. Students should fill the container with room-temperature water until the rocks are covered.
4. Have the groups add three drops of food coloring to one cup of hot water. Ask the groups to write down what they think will happen when they pour the hot colored water into the paper cup. Now pour the hot water into the paper cup.
5. Students will observe the colored water diffuse through the holes in the cup, but barely mix with the cold water. Most of the hot water will stay near the top of the container and move over the "range".
6. Empty the dishes and repeat the process filling the dish with hot water and the cup with cold, colored water. Before students pour the cold water into the cup, have the groups write down what they think will happen. The cold water will sink to the bottom through the hot water until it reaches the "mountain range," where it will be blocked. The cold water will not be able to pass over the rocks because it can't rise over them.
7. Explain how hot and cold air move just like hot and cold water. Lead a discussion about how the results of the experiment illustrate the way in which mountains can block rainstorms, which are usually brought on by cold-weather fronts.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Discuss what the groups thought would happen when adding hot water.
2. Discuss what the groups thought would happen when adding cold water.
3. Discuss cold water being more dense than hot water and hot water being less dense than cold water.
4. Ask students how they think elevation affects climate in their region.

Don DeMember, Kingsview Middle School. Germantown, Maryland. USA — <http://school.discoveryeducation.com/lessonplans/programs/mtbarrier/>

Physical map of
Papua New
Guinea with
mountain ranges.



View of Uka-
rumpa in Papua
New Guinea.

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/kahunapulej/358336990/>

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Synopsis: La Niña is expected to continue into Northern Hemisphere spring 2008. La Niña reached moderate strength during November 2007, with below-average sea surface temperatures (SSTs) extending from 160E to the South American coast. All of the Niño region indices remained cooler than 1.0°C, with the most substantial cooling occurring in the Niño-4 region located in the central equatorial Pacific Ocean (150W-160E and 5N-5S). Consistent with these oceanic conditions, low-level easterly winds and upper-level westerly winds strengthened across the central equatorial Pacific, convection remained suppressed throughout the central and eastern equatorial Pacific, and an area of enhanced convection covered the far western Pacific. Collectively, these oceanic and atmospheric conditions reflect La Niña. The recent SST forecasts (dynamical and statistical models) for the Niño 3.4 region indicate a continuation of La Niña into Northern Hemisphere spring 2008. Over half of the models indicate a moderate-to-strong La Niña through February, followed by a gradual weakening thereafter. Current atmospheric and oceanic conditions and recent trends are consistent with the model forecasts.

NOAA Climate Prediction Center

http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/analysis_monitoring/enso_advisory/ensodisc.html

Get to Know: Eric Pollard



Eric working on an environmental community project

Wednesday November 28, 2007

Hey there! I'm Eric Pollard, a student assistant here at the Oklahoma Wind Power Initiative. I am a senior in Political Science and am also pursuing a minor in Interdisciplinary Perspectives on the Environment at the University of Oklahoma. OWPI is a dream job for me because I've always wanted to be a part of the practical, economically viable solutions to some of today's most important environmental and energy challenges. Putting up wind towers!

I'm from right up the road in Edmond, OK (Go Bulldogs!). I love my family, my friends, and



Eric thinking "green"

weekends. In addition to my work at OWPI, I am a member of OurEarth (OU's student environmental organization), the Campus Climate Challenge, Chairman of the Problems & Projects Committee of OU Student Congress, and a patron of the arts.

- Eric Pollard

SPaRCE would like to thank those of you who have made this program possible: NOAA Office of Global Programs, NOAA PI-GCOS and especially Howard Diamond. Thank you!