



ISLAND MATTERS *Mufi Hannemann*

In Need Of High-rise Sprinkler Systems

The tragic Marco Polo apartment fire last week was a reminder of the huge dangers that high-rises can pose to residents and firefighters alike. That condominium tower, like so many others, was not equipped with fire sprinklers because it was constructed several years before the city began requiring the safety feature in high-rises in 1975.

I recall that one of my early calls as the new mayor of the City and County of Honolulu was to push for the retrofitting of fire sprinklers in high-rises. That was in February 2005, in conjunction with the work of Honolulu City Council's Residential Fire Safety Advisory Committee.

At the time, I said, "Public health and safety is the No. 1 concern for the mayor of the City and County of Honolulu. I emphasized this point during the campaign, and, today, I reiterate my support for the retrofitting of those high-rise buildings on our island that are not currently equipped with fire sprinkler systems."

The Council's committee and my statement came in the wake of two fires just the week before. I pointed out that the lives of residents and firefighters were at stake. Despite the high cost of retrofitting a high-rise, even if only one life were to be saved, it would be worth the investment — a statement that was often echoed by the two very able and dedicated fire chiefs that I served with: Attilio Leonardi and Ken Silva.

Condominium owners have strongly opposed any attempt to require fire sprinklers because of the cost, and they have succeeded in resisting City Council legislation to mandate retrofits. Furthermore, the City Council's Residential Fire Safety Advisory Committee suggested a property tax credit, loans and other incentives to encourage retrofits, but none have drawn significant support during the past dozen years or longer.

Now that the smoke has cleared for now, Mayor Kirk Caldwell has lent his support for retrofitting older residential high-rises with fire sprinklers. Let's hope he'll push hard for a city ordinance that will require stronger fire-safety measures in buildings and looks to offer appropriate incentives to encourage those who may resist based on cost to come to the table more willingly. Strong Council support will also be imperative.

Before I leave the subject, let me give a shout-out to 'Iolani School, my alma mater, for opening their doors to the Marco Polo residents who had to evacuate their residences during the firefighting operation and beyond. It's great to see the community pulling together in assisting the American Red Cross of Hawai'i in times of need and having people lend a helping hand to friend and stranger alike.

Waimānalo Rodeo Back For Fourth Straight Year

If you like rodeos, bull riding, barrel racing and all things country, you'll love



Official flag carrier Sandy Van signals the start of the All American Rodeo.

PHOTO COURTESY DITA HOLIFIELD PRODUCTIONS

the All American Rodeo returning to Waimānalo's New Town & Country Stables July 27-29 for the fourth consecutive year.

Having attended prior rodeos that Dita Holifield, Hawai'i's queen of country music, has staged along with third-generation paniolo Bud Gibson and his wife, Katy, owners of the stables, this is unquestionably the largest rodeo production in the 808.

It features four exciting shows, one of which is an Armed Forces Day event at noon July 29, offering discounted tickets to all active and retired military

personnel. Holifield's passion for rodeo stems from growing up in Lubbock, Texas, where she unabashedly admits, "Cowboys are a way of life."

Furthermore, she adds, "As a professional country singer and general manager of country station (KHCM-FM) 97.5," she is thrilled to provide "an opportunity every year for local families and the military to see Hawai'i's toughest cowboys and livestock up close and personal."

In addition to the rodeo productions, there will also be plenty of family-friendly activities includ-

ing the Fish Family Petting Zoo, pony rides, mechanical bull riding and for the first time a Half-Time Mascot/Knockerball Bash.

Finally, the rodeo also is a benefit for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, and Kailua and Kapolei high schools. Tickets are available for purchase online at hawaiiiallamericanrodeo.com, hawaiiisalem.com and honoluluboxoffice.com. Walk-up tickets may also be purchased on event days, subject to availability.

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