

Notes from Kea‘au Community Update Session  
Kea‘au Armory  
Tuesday, July 17, 2023  
5:00pm – 6:00pm

Number of Community Members Attending: 0

Attendees:

- Director Doug Adams, Research and Development (R&D)
- Council Member Matt Kaneali‘i-Kleinfelder
- Representatives from Hawaiian Electric
- Glenn Sako, Economic Development Specialist - Agriculture Program, R&D
- Riley Saito, Economic Development Specialist – Energy and Infrastructure Program, R&D

Agenda and Notes:

I. Introduction, Director Adams

II. Hawaiian Electric Updates

- Cost of oil has decreased, resulting in reduced electricity rate.
- For delays in service or payment assistance plans, [contact Hawaiian Electric](#).
- [Energy savings resources literature](#) is available online.
- Renewable energy portfolio percentage is now calculated as energy generated, not sold, totaling roughly 50%; Waikoloa AES solar project is online effective 04/23.
- Kalaoa Solar, Na‘alehu Solar completion dates in 2025; will operate with shares for LMI households.
- Beginning in 2018, wrote an Integrated Grid Plan to expand choices, stabilize rates, and engage communities.

III. Broadband Updates, Riley Saito

- R&D investing in digital equity (how to access and utilize the internet), with emphasis on underserved communities.
- Created an [ArcGIS Story Map](#) showing social vulnerability index and facilities that are community anchor institutions.
- Underwent a process of determining where internet access was lacking on the island and will then focus on equity of delivery of broadband when new infrastructure is implemented; internet service providers will build new infrastructure, but they are more focused on profit in high-consumption areas.
- Kea‘au Armory and other Parks & Recreation sites have internet access; new Animal Control facility will receive internet access.
- Service providers are claiming to the FCC that internet access exists throughout the island, so R&D challenged FCC-recorded download speeds.
- Households can receive digital services (Wi-Fi expenses, one-time computer purchases, etc.) rebates through [Affordable Connectivity Program](#).

#### IV. Agriculture Updates, Glenn Sako

- Big Island Feral Pig Control Project model initiated by Malama o Puna with R&D funding; first project-based plan that R&D received.
- Setting up website to inform hunters of sightings; creates hunter code of conduct, including a ban on snares; organizing workshops for education on hunting, butchering, and cooking to prevent disease transmission; promoting value-added products and creating system to distribute pigs for household consumption.
- Agricultural theft is a top concern of producers.
- R&D is generating a Self-Reporting Agricultural Theft/Trespass form, which will be on the website and distributed to police.
- Theft should be self-reported to save time, assist limited police resources, and collect statistics.

#### V. R&D Updates, Director Adams

- R&D has executed an RFI for solutions for green energy production on-island that will reduce reliance on fossil fuels and greenhouse gas emissions.
- HTA is helping R&D implement stewardship programs in Keaukaha and Pohoiki.
- R&D just released [Integrated Climate Action Plan](#).
- R&D utilizing ARPA funds for early childhood education efforts.

#### Comments:

- Can subdivision community associations have Community Anchor Institutions to receive broadband funding?
  - CAIs cover any places that convene large groups of community members.
  - County facilities will be interim bridge for the quickest-arriving broadband funding accessible to the County.
  - R&D will bring Hawai'i Island Digital Equity Coalition (HIDEC) meetings to each district of the island to expand digital equity and knowledge.
- Could the pigs be utilized for other food sources (i.e., feed for animals)? Will USDA help with the acceptance and processing of pigs?
  - Malama o Puna has not made determinations on other uses for the pigs, but they are open to possibilities.
  - They have spoken with a butcher willing to harvest the meat; USDA will have it quality tested.