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## Hawaii's Roads, Bridges are Dilapidated, National Study Shows; UH Manoa, NASA, In Search of Great Radio; Hawaii's Elite Pack Waialae Country Club

### Hawaii's Roads, Bridges, Dilapidated, National Study Shows

According to a new report by the national non-profit transportation research group TRIP, America's roads and bridges in rural communities are facing capacity issues. In addition, they are deteriorating, they lack desirable safety features, and they have a traffic fatality rate considerably higher than other roads and highways.

In "[Rural Connections: Challenges and Opportunities in America's Heartland](#)," TRIP examines the condition of roads and bridges in "rural America", which the study defines as "all places and people living outside the primary daily commuting zones of cities with 50,000 people or more."

Hawaii's roads and bridges did not fare well under TRIP's scrutiny. Hawaii ranks 29th worst for the condition of its roads in rural areas and 16th worst for the condition of its bridges.

In other national findings outlined in the report:

- "Traffic crashes and fatalities on rural roads remain disproportionately high, occurring at a rate more than three times higher than all other roads."
- "Although they carry only 25 percent of all vehicle miles of travel in the U.S., crashes on the nation's rural, non-Interstate routes resulted in 51 percent of the nation's 33,808 traffic deaths in 2009. The authors cite 'inadequate roadway safety design, longer emergency vehicle response times and the higher speeds traveled on rural roads are factors in the higher traffic fatality rate.'"
- "In 2008, 12 percent of the nation's major rural roads were rated in poor condition and another 43 percent were rated in mediocre or fair condition."
- "In 2010, 13 percent of the nation's rural bridges were rated as structurally deficient and 10 percent were functionally obsolete."

Will Wilkins, executive director of TRIP, said: "The safety and quality of life in America's small communities and rural areas and the health of the nation's economy ride on our rural transportation system. This backbone of the heartland allows mobility and connectivity for millions

of rural Americans and provides crucial links from farm to market, moves manufactured and energy products, and provides access to countless tourist and recreational destinations. But, with long-term federal transportation legislation stuck in political gridlock in Washington, America's rural communities and economies could face even higher unemployment and decline."

TRIP is advocating for Congress to fund a "robust, multi-year highway and transit bill" and recommends that Congress reauthorization of SAFETEA-LU "to move U.S. infrastructure into the 21st century, bolster economic recovery efforts, and improve the quality of life in every corner of our nation."

Specifically TRIP calls for:

- "Modernizing and extending key routes to accommodate personal and commercial travel,
- "Improving public transit access to rural areas,
- "Implementing needed roadway safety improvements,
- "Improving emergency response times,
- "and adequately funding state and local transportation programs to insure sufficient preservation and maintenance of rural transportation assets."

### University of Hawaii Manoa, NASA, In Search of Great Radio

NASA has allocated a \$1 million grant to a group of University of Hawaii Particle Astrophysicists led by Professors Peter Gorham and Gary Varner in the UH Mānoa Department of Physics and Astronomy.

They will begin development of what they are calling a "radical new design of a stratospheric balloon-based astrophysics observatory."

They will attempt for the first time to build a ExaVolt Antenna, which is a "balloon-based sub-orbital radio dish" as large as ground-based radio telescopes.

The goal is to measure radio impulses generated by ultra-high energy cosmic particles that they say are "a hundred times better than current systems."



It relies on the recent development of a new type of stratospheric balloon, known as a super-pressure balloon.

"The current NASA grant will support an initial phase of the project to develop a scale model prototype about 60-80 ft in diameter (about 1/5 the size of the full balloon) which will then be flown sometime in the next few years on a tether within a large airship hangar to confirm the performance of the system. If all goes well, the group then hopes to scale up to and fly the full-scale EVA soon afterwards," the University said in a statement.

### Hawaii's Elite Pack Waialae Country Club

Last night, Waialae Country Club held a Hawaiian night celebration to show off its newly renovated interior after being closed several months.

The Hawaiian group, Olomana, performed and several notable people were in attendance.

Those included former Governor Ariyoshi and his wife, the current Chief Justice Mark Recktenwald, the former Chief Justice Ronald Moon, and former University of Hawaii Baseball Head Coach Les Murakami.

Emme Tomimbang, former KHON TV 2 news anchor turned producer, was the host of the event. She was there with her husband, retired Appellate Judge James S.S. Burns.

Al Harrington, a Hawaiian entertainer who has a recurring role on Hawaii 5-0, joined Olomana on stage to sing one of the Hawaiian melodies.

Meanwhile, in an adjoining room, Gov. Neil Abercrombie was attending a private business event.