

The Governor of Hawaii is Linda Lingle. Below is her message, ***Continuing the Journey*** that she posted on the Hawaii.gov website in December 2009.

Continuing the Journey

For the past seven years, it has been my honor and privilege to serve as Governor of our great State of Hawai'i. I am truly grateful for the strong support my Administration has received from people throughout our state since December 2002.

Tomorrow, I begin my final 365 days in office. Although my remaining time in office is relatively short, I want to assure you that my Administration will push hard to continue making progress until the last minute of the last hour of our last day.

To use a football metaphor, we are not content to simply run out the clock. Rather, this is more like a two-minute drill as we attempt to score another touchdown before the fourth quarter draws to a close.

I want the people of Hawai'i to know that I will not be seeking another elected office in 2010. My commitment and obligation from the day I was first elected, and my focus over the next 12 months is to finish the job you entrusted me to do - achieve a "New Beginning" for the Aloha State.

Tomorrow, with renewed excitement and vigor, I will continue the job you hired me to do.

If you look back at the goals my Administration set out to accomplish seven years ago, articulated in our New Beginning plan, you will see that we have achieved nearly 80 percent of them. As for the remaining goals, we continue to make progress.

In addition to the specific plans we first detailed in 2002, I want to acknowledge the work of my

Cabinet directors and their staffs who together have completed hundreds of other important initiatives that have improved the quality of life in Hawai'i and laid a foundation for a stronger future for our state.

You can learn more by visiting my Web site at www.hawaii.gov/gov , but here are just a few examples:

- The [Department of Accounting and General Services](#) has transformed the state's procurement process to bring about more transparency, and partnered with the community to build and open five homeless shelters and transitional housing projects on O'ahu and two on Kaua'i;
- The [Department of Agriculture](#) has lessened the burden on pets and pet owners by revamping animal quarantine regulations;
- The [Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism](#) has diversified and expanded our economy through new international partnerships with China and other countries and has established our state as a model for energy independence;
- The [Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs](#) has dramatically cut fees and assessments for businesses and consumers;
- The [Department of Hawaiian Home Lands](#) awarded more leases to beneficiaries over the past seven years than in the trust's previous 80-year history;
- The [Department of Human Services](#) has strengthened at-risk families and reduced the number of children in foster care by 50%, while achieving one of the nation's lowest child re-abuse rates;
- The [Department of Land and Natural Resources](#) prevented an ecological disaster at [Lak e Wilson](#) , helped protect the United States' largest archipelago (Papahānaumokuākea) and initiated a Recreational Renaissance to restore our parks and recreational boat harbors; and,
- The [Department of Transportation](#) continues to significantly improve and modernize our airports, harbors and highways.
- Looking ahead, the 2010 legislative session, which begins next month, will be the most challenging of my two terms in office. As we know, Hawai'i is facing an unprecedented and worsening budget crisis, due to the global economic recession, and we must make some very hard decisions regarding state spending.

When I took my initial oath of office in December 2002, the State was spending freely in the midst of a troubled economy. Through prudent fiscal management, my Administration was able to restore a budget surplus until the unexpected global economic downturn. Despite the

challenges we now face, I will maintain fiscal discipline and be the one to make the tough decisions. This is as it should be; it is my obligation. After all, I wasn't elected to lead only during good times but in all possible situations.

My approach remains the same as it was in 2002: simply stated, State government must live within its means, just as families find ways to live within their household budgets.

Despite the financial turmoil that has deeply affected Hawai'i and most parts of the world, I remain optimistic about what we can accomplish during 2010. To that end, my Administration is putting the final touches on an outstanding package of legislative bills that we will submit on January 25, 2010 to the House and Senate.

Our priorities include: stimulating the economy and creating jobs, reforming our public education system, developing clean energy sources while achieving energy security, modernizing our transportation infrastructure, protecting the environment, and creating brighter futures for our students through scholastic robotics and other [STEM](#) (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) education programs. These are not disconnected proposals, but are connected by the common theme of developing innovative ways for Hawai'i to progress in our ever-changing world, and prosper in the years ahead.

As these far-reaching proposals make their way through the legislative process, I will call on our residents and businesses to come forward and voice their support. Public involvement is critical to the workings of government, and is especially important when funds are in short supply.

I encourage the public to share their comments, questions and concerns with me, and there are many ways to do so. For instance, you can call in during my frequent radio talk show appearances, or send an e-mail to governor.lingle@hawaii.gov.

Finally, I want everyone to know that my Cabinet directors and I are just as excited about the future of Hawai'i as the day we first took office seven years ago. For even though the challenges are great, our state's potential and the people of Hawai'i are far greater.

