

UOG dedicates site for School of Engineering

By Louella Losinio
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The University of Guam on Monday held a dedication ceremony for its highly anticipated School of Engineering facility, which would be the first of its kind not only on Guam but the entire region.

The School of Engineering is one of the capital improvement projects under the university's Vision 2025 Physical Master Plan.

UOG President Robert Underwood said he cannot overstate how important the new school is to the island.

"I can't overemphasize what it means to have a school that is devoted to this profession," he said. "Not only as we look to the impending military buildup, but just looking at the way we live and the way that we construct our lives. The way we deal with the man-made part of our environment. Engineers are at the forefront of that, dealing with the man-made part of our environment."

Jillette Leon-Guerrero, acting chair of the UOG Board of Regents, said board members have been excited since September 2016, when they formally approved the establishment of the four-year engineering program.

She said the event marks a milestone in the efforts of the hardworking and dedicated UOG leadership, faculty, staff and partners to make the facility a reality.



"WHAT IT MEANS":
University of Guam President Robert Underwood makes opening remarks Monday during the School of Engineering site dedication ceremony. Dontana Keraskes/The Guam Daily Post

According to Shahram Khosrowpanah, dean of the School of Engineering, they will soon offer full, four-year bachelor of science programs in civil and environmental engineering. He said they are hoping to officially start the four-year program in spring 2019.

The two-story structure will be built adjacent to the university's existing Agriculture and Life Sciences building. It will have 16,000 square feet of floor space and feature six faculty offices, two state-of-the-art student classrooms, three laboratories for soil-structure, hydraulics and environmental engineering, and a computer lab.

\$21.7M loan

In December 2016, UOG administrators, members of the UOG Endowment Fund and representatives from the U.S. Department of Agriculture held a closing ceremony for a \$21.7

million loan intended for UOG facility improvements.

The loan supported the construction of the new student services center and the engineering building.

According to Randall Wiegand, UOG vice president of administration and finance, the School of Engineering will cost around \$5 million. They are eyeing a July 2019 opening for the new building.

Pre-engineering program

Currently, UOG offers a four-year pre-engineering program. Students then complete their engineering degree at partner institutions such as the University of Hawaii, University of Iowa and Mapua University in the Philippines.

According to UOG, with the projected infrastructure demands of the military buildup on the island, the need to create a full engineering program has become even more critical.

Audit: Trust revenues fall

A decrease in building permit fee collections and reduced income from interest are primarily to blame for the decline in revenues at the Guam Preservation Trust, according to an audit from the Office of Public Accountability.

As a result, the trust closed fiscal year 2017 with a net loss of \$980,000, although that was less than the \$2.6 million loss reported the previous year.

The Guam Preservation Trust is a nonprofit public corporation tasked with preserving and protecting Guam's historic sites and culture.

Revenues

Eighty-eight percent of the trust's revenues come from building permit fees. The audit reports that building fees fell from \$721,000 in fiscal 2016 to \$676,000 in fiscal 2017. In addition, the trust previously would get 100 percent of the fees, but Public Law 33-66 reduced the trust's share to just 50 percent, according to the report.

Interest income fell by more than half, according to the audit, from \$48,000 in fiscal 2016 to just \$23,000 the next year. Interest represents just 3 percent of GPT's income, and it is the only other constant source of income aside from building permit fees.

The trust received \$70,000 in grants and other financial support in fiscal 2017, which was \$19,000 more than the previous year, but not enough to offset the declines in building permit fees and interest income.

The audit report states the trust must do a better job of detailing documentation to justify expense reimbursements. Second, it needs to revise its procurement policy to ensure compliance with Guam procurement law. And the trust must improve its managing of the level of cash outlays for projects and operating expenses.

In fiscal 2017, the trust had 36 approved projects totaling \$6 million in grants, of which \$1.4 million has yet to be spent.

The \$1.3 million that was spent on various projects was less than half of the amount spent in the previous year.

The largest grant expenditures in fiscal 2017 were for the rehabilitation of the Guam Congress Building, \$550,000; Juan Flores House, \$268,000; Humatak Bridge, \$262,000; and Antonia Chargualaf House, \$393,000.

(Daily Post Staff)

Annual Easter egg hunt March 28

By Alana Chargualaf
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Children ages 1 through 10 can get their baskets ready for the Annual Easter Fair and Egg Hunt - "the largest egg hunt of the season" - hosted by the

Department of Parks and Recreation and McDonald's of Guam.

More than 10,000 treat-filled plastic eggs will be spread throughout the yard of the Guam Sports Complex in Dededo, for four egg-hunt age divisions: 1 to 3, 4 to 5, 6 to 8, and 9 to 10. Participants in each division will have the opportunity to claim the special Golden Egg prize.

Egg hunters can also enter their baskets in a contest for most earth-

friendly, most beautiful, and funniest Easter baskets.

Fun for the whole family

In addition to the basket contest and egg hunt, participants will have a chance to meet the Easter bunny and visit vendors, nonprofit groups, government agency booths.

All are encouraged to bring their baskets as well as sunscreen, chairs and umbrellas.

The day's activities begin with the Easter basket contest at 2 p.m., followed by the Egg hunt from 3 to 4 p.m. March 28 at the sports complex.

As a go-green reminder, plastic Easter grass will be prohibited on the grounds.

Go green

Plastic Easter grass will be prohibited on the grounds of the Guam Sports Complex in Dededo during the activities

GUAM BOARD OF EXAMINERS FOR OPTOMETRY

Regular Board Meeting, Tuesday, March 27, at 8:30 AM at the Terlaje Professional Building, 194 Hernan Cortez Avenue, 2nd Floor, Suite 209 Health Professional Licensing Office Board Conference Room, Hagatna, Guam.

For more information please contact the Board office at 735-7405 thru 12. Persons with disabilities needing special accommodations may call Jimmy Sian at 735-7172 or the telecommunication device for the Hearing/Speech Impaired (TDD) at 649-1801. Executive meeting may be called if necessary.

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CURRENCY EXCHANGE RATES On March 22, \$1 was worth:	52.185	105.91	1,072.03	29.142	6.3225	1.2910	0.8099
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Tumon building to transform into hotel



PLAZA TO HOTEL: The Guam Land Use Commission has approved a plan to convert K-Plaza from a commercial building to mixed commercial uses and a hotel in Tumon.
David Castro/The Guam Daily Post

By Louella Losinio
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A commercial building in the heart of Tumon will have a revised purpose with a planned mixed hotel and commercial space conversion in the works.

KALS LLC, owners of K-Plaza, submitted an application to the Guam Land Use Commission. The owners requested for an amendment to their current tentative development plan so they could expand the use of the existing structure.

K-Plaza, which is located on the corner of Happy Landing Road, will convert most of its space into a 21-room hotel.

During a meeting on March 9, the commissioners unanimously approved the application, which authorized the conversion of the prop-

erty into a mixed hotel and commercial space.

The application did not receive any opposition from the public.

Raymund C. Cayanan and Samuel M. McPhetres, principals of GUMA Architects LLC, and property owner Magi Kallingal presented the details of the project.

According to McPhetres, the property conversion would provide an opportunity to turn an unused space into an income-generating venture for the building owner. He said the owner has not been able to fully optimize the space's income-generating potential for years.

McPhetres added that, in an area such as Tumon, it also could provide a more affordable accommodation option for the local tourism industry.

The conversion project is estimated to cost \$1.5 million. According to



“It is just interior and landscaping improvements basically, with plans to separate the entrance of the commercial space from the hotel.”

— Samuel M. McPhetres,
principal, GUMA Architects LLC



HOTEL ROOMS PLANNED: This photo shows a graphic rendering of the proposed hotel room interior. KALS LLC, owners of K-Plaza, applied for a tentative development plan that would allow the space to be used for both commercial and hotel use. K-Plaza, which is located on the corner of Happy Landing Road, will convert most of its space into a 21-room hotel.
Image courtesy of GUMA Architects LLC

McPhetres, the current building was constructed in 2000 so there will be minimal changes to the structure.

“It is just interior and landscaping improvements basically, with plans to separate the entrance of the commercial space from the hotel,” he said.

According to Cayanan, they would be incorporating a tropical design theme for the hotel. Aside from the construction of new hotel rooms, the project also includes 64 parking stalls as well as new landscaping improvements, as required by the development plan for the area.

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Flights from Taipei to increase frequency

Taiwan visitors will soon have more flight options to Guam. China Airlines, the only carrier with direct service to Guam from the Taipei Taoyuan International Airport, announced it would increase its flight frequency to five times weekly, starting Sunday, the Guam Visitors Bureau announced Thursday.

“Last October, Gov. Eddie Calvo led a delegation from GVB, (the A.B. Won Pat Guam International Airport Authority and Guam Economic Development Authority) in Taiwan and met with Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen and other Taiwanese government entities to enhance our business relations and establish new partnerships,” GVB stated.



IN FLIGHT: A China Airlines aircraft is shown. The airline is the only carrier with direct service to Guam from the Taipei Taoyuan International Airport. Photo courtesy of China Airlines

‘Investment in the Taiwan market’
“We also met with airline and travel trade partners to express Guam’s commitment and investment in the Taiwan market,” said GVB President and CEO Nathan Denight. “This announcement by China Airlines acknowledges our efforts and is an incremental step to seeing the relationship between Taiwan and Guam flourish. We thank China Air for their

decision to add a fifth flight to our island paradise.”

The China Airlines initiative continues through Oct. 25.

Striving to remain competitive

GVB’s marketing team is working aggressively to bring awareness to consumers through public relations efforts and cooperative promotions with GVB’s key trade partners in Taiwan, said GVB Director of Global Marketing Pilar Lagunaña.

“GVB is striving to remain competitive in this region in what is already a price-sensitive environment,” she said. “We need to sustain the demand for more seats to Guam to support China Airlines and ultimately, convince them to keep the added schedule.”

(Daily Post Staff)