

## "This Week With Hawaii's Law Enforcement"

Welcome Back. Now, each week, we will try to acknowledge people or agencies that have done an outstanding job in helping our communities, and who we feel are responsible for making our citizens safer in Hawaii.

This week, we'd like to recognize The Honorable State District Court Judge Lono J. Lee, from Honolulu, for his strong contribution to the Federal Weed and Seed Initiative.

As you may know the federal Weed and Seed Initiative designates particular areas in Hawaii for concentrated law enforcement and community action. All of these areas are chosen because they are heavily infested with violent, drug and other significant crime.

Thus, city, state and federal law enforcement agencies will come together to target the criminal element in these areas — in other words, we will "weed" them out of the area with aggressive investigations and prosecutions.

At the same time, we will join and support community efforts to reclaim and rejuvenate their neighborhoods. In other words, we will help "seed" the area. Neighborhood watch groups, park cleanups, town hall meetings and community events, are just some examples where they have done a tremendous job in bringing life back into these locations.

As a result, we have seen crime drop in these areas and businesses have relocated into the area — hiring the residents, and also throwing their support behind the continued community effort towards keeping their areas safe and thriving.

Thus, Weed and Seed is not a program but a community based strategy. Everyone becomes involved to revitalize their communities through collaborative efforts.

And this strategy works. In the Kalihi-Palama area, significant crime dropped by 70 percent in two years, and in the Waipahu area, crime dropped by 80 percent within one year. This is such fantastic results that Hawaii's Weed and Seed is nationally recognized — and I am so very proud of the efforts of our partners who collaborate and work together for the good of their communities.

But, in order to be successful, criminals need to know that their illegal activities will result in swift punishment if convicted.

The Honolulu Weed and Seed Courtroom delivers this message to suspects arrested for illegal conduct in our communities. And, I firmly believe that Judge Lee — the presiding judge in that Court Room, has exemplified an outstanding judicial temperament and fortitude in his review and judgment of criminal cases.

Through his actions and follow-throughs, Judge Lee has served the people of Hawaii admirably, and he has acted to protect those residents and families living in our Weed and Seed communities.

Accordingly, State District Judge Lono C. Lee is this week's "Person of the Week," and he will be notified of this recognition - with our thanks and praise.