

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 25, 2004

Contact: Pati Fai'ai 633-4116

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ASG receives \$9 million for improvement of Tafuna, Fitiuta and Ofu airports

(UTULEI) – Governor Togiola Tulafono announced today the three airports of American Samoa will share \$9million in funding assistance for rehabilitation and construction of aircraft operating areas such as runways, aprons and taxiways.

The Governor says the funding is being provided through the Airport Improvement Program (AIP), and is based on 10,000 enplanements (departing passengers) in a calendar year.

The AIP, which is distributed by the Federal Aviation Administration, provides funds for the projects to improve air transport infrastructure including runways, taxiways, noise control, land purchases, safety and security, and gates at airports of the 50 states and its territories.

For American Samoa, Governor Togiola says the much-needed funds will be a big boost for Tafuna, Ofu and Fitiuta airports.

“Our airports play a vital role in our overall transportation system,” said the Governor. “Like any other infrastructure, airports require timely rehabilitation work to operate effectively and remain viable. The Airport Improvement Program assists the government with these costs.”

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Of the \$9,042,003, Pago Pago International Airport in Tafuna will receive \$7,847,003 to rehabilitate the main runway and to repair damage caused by Cyclone Heta. The Tafuna portion of the funds also includes the design of an airport apron, security enhancements and safety area improvements, construction of the Airport Rescue and Fire Fighting Training Facility and the installation of a perimeter fence.

The \$825,000 for Fitiuta Airport is to install a lighted wind cone and emergency generator and the construction of the Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting Facility.

Ofu Airport will get \$370,000 in assistance and it is for rehabilitating the runway, installation of a wind cone and also to conduct an environmental study for the runway extension.

“We are very thankful for this funding because our air transport growth is rapid and our expansion needs are numerous. This is great for our three airports,” concluded Governor Togiola.

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Acting Gov. Ipulasi speaks at Educational Leadership Academy

(UTULEI, July 25, 2004) - Acting Governor Ipulasi Aitofele Sunia was the keynote speaker at the Education Leadership Academy at Samoana Gym in Utulei today.

The Academy, sponsored by the Department of Education, promotes positive impact on student school performance by inspiring and developing highly effective school leaders.

Acting Gov. Ipulasi told the Territory's elementary and high school administrators and teachers in leadership positions that educational leaders must remain abreast with changes affecting them.

"We live in a constantly changing society and it is in the best interest of our small and remote territory to pay close attention to these changes and learn to appreciate the global changes in the educational system," said Acting Gov. Ipulasi. "Proceed as soon as practicable to adjust these changes, when and where it is necessary."

The Acting Governor told the teachers to remember that equally important is the inherent obligation as Samoans to preserve and protect certain aspects of Samoan lifestyles that are indigenous and unique to Samoans.

"I am referring to our culture," said Acting Gov. Ipulasi. "Do not allow our commitment to modern education diminish our concerns for the preservation of our culture."

Acting Gov. Ipulasi said it is the teachers common responsibility to prepare tomorrow's citizens.

"We want excellent teachers, fantastic principals and super administrators because you want to be excellent and fantastic and super," said Acting Gov. Ipulasi. "We need you to have high expectations and setting high standards and measuring results, improving schools that aren't doing well, and helping children who are falling behind."

Acting Governor Ipulasi said there's also an important place for partnerships -- partnerships with families, with businesses, and with churches --the faith-based communities.

"Good educational leaders must think about building and improving these partnerships," said Acting Gov. Ipulasi. "The families of the students that are part of you, and the businesses that they patronize, and the churches they attend, all play a role in the lives of your students. Take the leadership role means commitment and you already know it because you are here."

*****END*****

(UTULEI, August 2, 2004) – Governor Togiola Tulafono told an assembly of the Territory’s teachers today that education remains his top priority. Speaking at the annual teachers workshop at Samoana Gym, Gov. Togiola said he is committed to education and truly believes in what educators do.

“As a father with a daughter in high school, I highly value the contributions of public school teachers,” said the Governor. “You work hard, but we don’t give you enough recognition. I am very confident we will emerge from these tough times in the Department of Education because it must get better and we will do so by working together.”

“You and I have a sacred charge and that is to prepare our young people to meet the merciless challenges of tomorrow and we will prevail,” said the Governor. “It is going to take dedicated teachers to make sure no child is left behind.”

Gov. Togiola said teacher development and staff training is at the top of the list of priorities. He said ASCC will be offering a 4-year bachelor’s in education program for teachers as part of ASG’s commitment.

“A system is like a chain and I am going to see to it that teachers are the strongest link in the chain,” said Gov. Togiola. “DOE officials and I work constantly to refine plans to raise the level of proficiency in teaching.”

The Governor said reading is also high on the list of priorities, with Samoan Studies getting the recognition it truly deserves. He said there will be a strong move to integrate computer technology into classrooms.

“The school population is growing fast and we will need more good teachers,” said the Governor. “And we are on the right track to getting new teachers by working with the University of Hawaii and assisting teacher education through online degree programs.”

The Governor said fifteen teachers are now studying for Masters degrees through the University of Phoenix online programs and paid for by the Department of Education.

There are also off island summer workshops for teachers where 60 attended. Recently 35 teachers attended an educational conference in Saipan. Gov. Togiola highly encourage and challenged the teachers to get parents involved as well as networking within the department and the American Samoa school system.

“Working hand in hand with others in the system is very important,” said Gov. Togiola. “Hold your heads high and set higher goals for this school year.”

“Thank you for all that you do for the children of American Samoa. We appreciate your dedication, passion and hard work. You are helping to shape the future of our island home, and for that, I am deeply grateful,” concluded Governor Togiola.

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

**OFFICIAL PRESS RELEASE
(for immediate release)**

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GOVERNOR'S WHITE SUNDAY MESSAGE

(UTULEI, Oct. 7, 2004) - Governor Togiola Tulafono issued his White Sunday greeting today with the following message:

“Every year, White Sunday provides us with an opportunity to celebrate our children.

Our Children. They are the greatest source of promise for American Samoa. Our children today are the ones who will be running our island home tomorrow. They are our investment now with success to embrace later.

White Sunday is a reminder to cherish and value each child in our lives. Our commitment to our children is a loving partnership between all of us parents, grandparents, the school, the church, the village, and our island community as a whole.

Let's promote the development of healthy attitudes and feelings to our children. It will encourage each one of them to become an individual while trying to achieve satisfying relationships with others.

Let us be reminded in this year's White Sunday celebration, that human dignity and mutual respect are part of their development and it must begin with every adult they encounter daily and it must be reflected in our homes, schools, church and government. We continue to try to meet the diverse needs of our children and their families. Providing the best education is still our main priority.

The bonds that we create each day are vital to the success of our children because we believe each child deserves an opportunity for total development in American Samoa. Let's expand and reinforce the strengths of our children. And that starts in our respective homes.

On behalf of my wife --Mary, Lt. Governor Ipulasi, Mrs. Elisapeta Sunia, and all of our children and grandchildren, we wish all the children of American Samoa a very happy, blessed and safe White Sunday.” *****END*****