

PONANT LE SOLEAL: FOURTH CRUISE SHIP IN SIX MONTHS



The originally French-owned Le Soleal is a luxurious 264 passenger ship that called in at Chuuk port, Weno Island, in the early morning of March 19. It made stop here to allow its clients an experience of the island: land tour, snorkeling, and interacting with others at the busy downtown and nearby areas.

CVB had initial plans to orchestrate visits to the Japanese Lighthouse, Xavier High School, and the Nefo tunnels. However, we could not provide requested buses to service the 150 would-be site-seers in one group. This situation prompted a request for Chuuk State to consider funding tour-buses in the immediate future in the absence of reliable land tour operators. CVB is working on a short-term mitigation plan while working with investors and the private sectors to change the situation in this particular area of tourism.

The Le Soleal also made stop at Pollap Island.

According to its Solomon Islands to Micronesia voyage schedule, the Le Soleal would start the particular adventure in Honiara, going through a number of islands before reaching Weno and Pollap. After Pollap, it would sail on to Satawal Island, Ifalik Atoll, and the Gaferut Atoll in Yap before terminating in Guam.

It is an exciting six months period with cruise ships showing interest in this part of the world almost every month. We expect to receive another ship in April.

For the last three ships, the Pacific Coast Agency served as their local agent to assist with maritime and other requirements in Chuuk, FSM.

BCS WELCOMES CVB COMMUNITY OUTREACH STAFF

On March 20, CVB staff took the Visitor Friendly Approach (VFA) outreach program to the Berea Christian School (BCS) community.

Around sixteen young high school seniors from BCS took part in the program and demonstrated their awareness level and understanding of tourism related issues in Micronesia, focusing on Chuuk. This visit was our third of its kind, following after Chuuk High School and Saramen Chuuk Academy students and staff.

The VFA awareness program is being funded by local operation funds and little amount from a project based activity funds sourced under sector grants. The idea for the program is to increase sensitivity and awareness of tourism programs in Chuuk and create positive image for tourism as a driver of change and development in the islands. In addition, the programs is to attract students to consider college education in tourism related and hospitality programs to empower growth for this development sector in Micronesia.



ETENEKI BASKETBALL A HUGE SUCCESS IN ALL LEVELS



On March 15, the Eteneki Basketball initiative, led by One-Way Matisima energized Chuuk basketball lovers of all ages. Teams came in from all directions, within Chuuk and from communities in Guam, Hawaii, and the mainland USA.

Eteneki basketball, and the FAS series that took place in December 2023, also served social and community based functions for the young Chuukese ballers who mostly reside abroad. Some of them are dual citizens who seldom make home journey.

For the locals who basked in the frenzy experience of "great" tournaments, these games brought life and energy and many visitors who took advantage of the recently opened hotels.

CHUUK ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTIVE No.3-2024

The Honorable Governor Alexander R. Narruhn has issued the Administrative Directive No.3-2024 forming a Working Group to lead planning relating to the hosting of the 3rd Micronesia Expo slated to take place during the latter days of July.

Among the tasks for the working group, they member are to make recommendations to the leaders in terms of funding estimates as well as the host's obligations and roles in areas of venue, transportation, welcome and accommodation, safety, health and hygiene, catering, performance and arts, business and commerce, etc.

The working group is to be led by the Chuuk Visitors Bureau and the Division of Commerce and Industry. They have held initial meetings but will officially start their assigned tasks during the second week of April.

CVB has had the opportunities to engage in discussions regarding the Expo with certain members of the business community as well as other community leaders to ensure participation of the wider society, such as Chief Hernit Ikea from Polowot Island, first from right in the photo.



HOUSE SPEAKER MERSAI INITIATES DISCUSSION WITH CVB



The Honorable Lester Danny Mersai, Speaker of the House of Representatives, initiated a meeting with CVB on March 12 at the Café Laufer meeting room. T.H. Arthur Artie Irons II and T.H. Timothy Ruda, leaders of the House Committee on Resources and Development, were also at the meeting.

Speaker Mersai encouraged CVB to work closely with the House. He is keen on finding ways to empower tourism development as a pivotal development sector. He also would like to see Chuuk emulate programs and initiatives that are successful in neighboring islands.

The leaders of the House Committee on Ways and Means have engaged previously with CVB for the interest of increasing earmarked tourism funds from the travelers departure fees. More to be done.

CVB SUPPORTS TONOAS HISTORIC SITES



On March 21, CVB cleaning team went to Tonoas in response to request made by stakeholders for the Japanese Hospital historical site.

Upon arrival on Tonoas, CVB Executive Director Marz Akapito made courtesy call on The Honorable Gradvin Aisek at the Mayor's Office.

Tonoas Island holds several significant war relic and historic sites from the Japanese administration era.

CVB STARTS CLEAN UP OF POSSIBLE FSM EXPO SITE

Cleaning team from CVB began to cut grass and remove trashpiles from the area in between the Anderson Field, Iras Demo School, and the building that hosts the C&I and Marine Resources offices, including the small forest next to the tennis court. This area is being proposed as the site for the performance venue for the upcoming 3rd Micronesia Expo slated to take place the last week of July.



POSSIBLE CVB SITE: NURSERY AND OTHER STRUCTURES

Chuuk State Government has a small land property on the hill where the Nefo watershed area is located. CVB has obtained permission from The Honorable Governor Alexander R. Narruhn to clean up the property and utilize it for our cleaning program. Given the Governor's support, CVB is currently clearing the site where the old Governor's Residence is located with the interest to build a forestry nursery. The FSM and Chuuk State Forest Stewardship Project coordinators, Ms Tracey Ardos and Mr. Charlie Tommy, have held a meeting with CVB to determine specific support for the nursery idea.

Thanks to the inmates from Chuuk Public Safety for helping CVB cleaning crew on March 1 in grass cutting and removal of junks.



CVB RE-DRAFTS TOURISM DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Mission Statement: To enhance sustainable tourism development that carefully caters to visitors' needs, promotes environment care, and derives socioeconomic benefits.

Vision Statement: Quality business and leisure, valuing human rights and environmental integrity.

Nine Strategic Objectives have been identified as the main sectoral and programmatic focus for the set development period of 2024 to 2029. These objectives along with their thirty-nine Enabling Actions guide tourism related investment and funding emphasis by Chuuk State. They also determine and shape the pursuit of financial and technical assistance from the FSM National Government as well as other development partners in order to elevate institutional capacity and empower inter-agency collaboration pertinent to the facilitation of tourism programs.