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*Aloha Stadium*

Celebrating Hawai'i's Culture. Building Hawai'i's Future.

## NEWSLETTER

February 2026

### Manager's Corner



#### **A Blessing and a New Beginning at the Stadium District**

This month we held a blessing for our new Stadium Authority District Offices. The gathering brought together community partners, project stakeholders, staff, and elected leaders to mark an important step forward for the Aloha Stadium District. With a pule and blessing led by Kahu Kordell, we asked for guidance, safety, and wisdom as we began this next phase of work.

Following the blessing, we shared brief remarks acknowledging the many hands working together to move the project forward. These new offices will serve as a central hub for coordination, planning, and communication as we continue advancing the New Aloha Stadium Entertainment District. It represents collaboration and transparency, and it allows our team and partners to work side-by-side as the project transitions from planning into visible action.

We also marked another milestone with a dismantling demonstration at the stadium — a symbolic start of construction activity. While full construction of the new stadium is still ahead, this phase signals the beginning of on-site progress. Over the next month, preparatory work will begin, followed by approximately ten months of careful dismantling. This work is being done methodically and safely so materials can be removed responsibly, and the site can be prepared for future development.

For many in our community, Aloha Stadium holds decades of memories — football games, graduations, concerts, swap meet visits, and family traditions. We recognize that seeing physical changes can be emotional. Our goal is to honor that history while responsibly preparing the site for its next chapter, creating a district that will serve the people of Hawai'i for generations to come.

The blessing reminded us that this project is more than a construction effort. It is a commitment to stewardship, partnership, and community. As we move forward over the coming months, we will continue to keep the public informed and engaged, and we look forward to sharing more milestones with you along the way. Mahalo for being part of this journey with us.

Michael Yadao  
*Interim Stadium Manager*



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## A New Chapter for O'ahu's Gathering Place Begins



Aloha Hālawa District Partners

At the February 17 office blessing, Mayor Rick Blangiardi shared how this is a place of some of our proudest moments: the seats where our parents watched us play; the field where we gave it all for the glory; the stage where music's greatest legends sang to Hawai'i. This is the spirit in which we move forward—confidently, courageously, collaboratively—because our families of today and our future generations deserve the kind of gathering place that leaves the same impressions on their hearts: united and unforgettable.

Senator Glenn Wakai took a moment to reflect on the many meanings of Aloha being honored at the stadium. It is an expression of goodbye to a place that hosted five decades of sports and entertainment, he said. It is also an expression of hello to a new stadium and district that incorporates arts, culture, and a year-round gathering place for community connection.

Our elected leaders said it perfectly—the dismantling of something old gives rise to something new—and we're building this vision with you in mind.

Aloha nui,

Aloha Hālawa District Partners



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**Here's the Answer**

*You asked—we're answering. "Here's the Answer" highlights common questions and provides clear updates you can trust.*

**Q: Is the number of housing units planned for the New Aloha Stadium Entertainment District (NASED) increasing?**

**A:** No. The project remains planned for approximately 4,500 total housing units at full build-out, and this number has not changed. The housing program was established through independent market and feasibility studies, infrastructure and utility capacity reviews, soil and site assessments, and extensive community engagement. While zoning could theoretically allow for more units, the State, Board of Water Supply, and the developer determined that increasing density beyond this level would create significant infrastructure, financial, and community impacts without added benefit. The planned housing will include a mix of residential housing, rental apartments, and leasehold condominiums, phased to match infrastructure capacity and market demand. Overall, the plan aims to address Hawai'i's housing needs while maintaining a livable, functional, and sustainable district for surrounding neighborhoods.

For direct questions, residents may also reach out to us through our email at [alohastadium@hawaii.gov](mailto:alohastadium@hawaii.gov).

[More FAQs](#)

## What's Going on at Aloha Stadium



### **Celebrate Chinese New Year at the Marketplace**

Ring in the Year of the Fire Horse with a morning of culture, tradition, and shopping at the Aloha Stadium Swap Meet & Marketplace. On Sunday, March 1, 2026, starting at 9:30am, shoppers are invited to enjoy a special Chinese New Year celebration while exploring Hawai'i's largest outdoor market.

The celebration will kick off at the Ho'okipa Hale Entertainment Stage with a traditional Lion Dance performance by the Gee Yung Martial Arts Dragon & Lion Dance Sports Association.

After the stage performance, the lions will travel throughout the Marketplace, weaving through aisles and stopping at vendor booths to greet merchants and shoppers. Visitors will have the chance to watch the performers up close, take photos, and experience a cultural tradition that has long been part of our local New Year celebrations.

With hundreds of local vendors offering snacks, crafts, apparel, souvenirs, and handmade goods, the event is a great way for families and visitors to celebrate while supporting small businesses. Come early, enjoy the performance, and spend the morning shopping, eating, and sharing in the festive spirit of the Lunar New Year at the Aloha Stadium Swap Meet & Marketplace.

## Aloha Stadium Swap Meet and Marketplace - Explore, Engage & Play



Enjoy Kama'āina Weekends at the Swap Meet & Marketplace, as we continue to showcase local businesses, island music, and the best deals in the state. Open every Wednesday, Saturday, and Sunday - discover unique treasures only at Hawai'i's premier open-air market.

### **EXPLORE**

Public parking is now available through Hālawā Gate 3 (across from Ice Palace) with easy access via Kahuapaani Street. Admission remains affordable at \$2 for general, \$1 for kama'āina and active-duty military, and free for keiki 11 years and under.

### **ENGAGE**

Stay connected to ensure you never miss any of the latest Marketplace events and exciting activities. For *What You Need To Know Before You Go* visit

<https://alohastadium.hawaii.gov/new-swap-meet-marketplace-relocation>.

## PLAY

Grab a bite to eat at one of our food trucks and experience the heartbeat of Aloha at our Ho'okipa Hale Entertainment Stage & Food Court Tent, where local artists bring the spirit of Hawai'i through music and dance.

## This Month's Look Back



Aloha Stadium has long been a place where culture, sports, and community came together. From Chinese New Year celebrations and international baseball spring training exhibitions, to major sporting events like the Pro Bowl, the stadium welcomed people from across the islands and around the world. It also hosted unforgettable moments in entertainment history, including Michael Jackson's iconic 1997 performance, making the stadium a true gathering place for shared memories and tradition.



## Making Moves at Aloha Stadium

One Team. One Community. Moving Forward Together. As our organization continues to grow and evolve through ongoing operations and long-range planning for the district, this section highlights our staff, new roles, leadership updates, and milestones while

recognizing the effort and commitment that support current operations and help guide the New Aloha Stadium Entertainment District (NASED) forward.

### **Michael Yadao — Interim Stadium Manager**

Mike Yadao has stepped into the role of Interim Stadium Manager. In his new role, Mike continues to focus on maintaining safe, reliable operations while helping guide the transition into the next chapter of the stadium district. Under his leadership, the project has seen increased momentum and several exciting developments as planning and coordination efforts continue to move forward.

### **Walter Thoemmes — Board Chair & Community Leader**

Congratulations Walter Thoemmes, who was elected as the new Chair of the Aloha Stadium Authority Board in late January 2026. In addition to his leadership role with the Stadium Authority, Walter will serve as the newly appointed President and Chief Executive Officer of the YMCA of Honolulu starting next month. Walter's continued service as Chair of the Stadium Authority, alongside this new role, underscores his deep commitment to strengthening communities and advancing projects that create long-term impact for our state. We congratulate him on this well-deserved appointment and look forward to working together as he begins this next chapter of leadership with the Stadium Authority.

### **Rey-J Horne — Human Resources**

Joining the stadium staff is Rey-J, our new Human Resources team member. Rey-J will support recruitment, employee relations, and staff development, helping ensure our employees have the resources and support they need to succeed. As the organization continues to grow and adapt, this role is essential in strengthening our internal operations and supporting the people who keep the facility running every day.



### **Our Team. Hawai'i's Team. — University of Hawai'i Athletics Corner**

For generations, University of Hawai'i Athletics has been woven into the story of Aloha Stadium. From unforgettable football Saturdays to championship celebrations, the stadium has long served as a gathering place where the community comes together to support our student athletes. As we move forward with the New Aloha Stadium Entertainment District, that connection remains strong. As part of our continued partnership, Aloha Stadium is proud to help elevate and share these stories, supporting UH Athletics and strengthening the connection between the teams and the community they represent.

The University of Hawai'i Athletics "Bows In-Depth" series invites fans to step beyond the scoreboard and into the personal side of Rainbow Warrior and Rainbow Wāhine athletics. Each feature highlights the journeys of student-athletes, coaches, and staff—sharing the work, sacrifice, and pride that shape the program. From stories of perseverance and leadership to team traditions and community outreach, the series captures the spirit of representing Hawai'i and the responsibility athletes feel wearing "Hawai'i" across their jersey. For readers, it offers a meaningful connection to the people behind the games and a deeper appreciation for the role UH Athletics plays across the islands.

For the latest features visit <https://hawaiiathletics.com/feature/BowsInDepth>

## Making Headlines

*A snapshot of recent news and media stories highlighting Aloha Stadium, our community partnerships, and progress across the entertainment district.*

**Star-Advertiser  
Reports on Workers  
Beginning to  
Dismantle Aloha  
Stadium**

Demolition of the original 50,000-seat Aloha Stadium has begun as part of the long-delayed New Aloha Stadium Entertainment District project, clearing the way for a new 31,000-seat stadium and a \$2+ billion mixed-use development slated for completion in 2029. Read the full article [here](#).

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