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STATE OF THE COUNTY ADDRESS

Good morning, Chairman Kihune, members of the County Council, Directors and Deputies, Board and Commission Members, and friends.

This is my second report to the people of Maui County, and I am proud to tell you that we are making steady progress toward creating the kind of community we can all be proud of.

I sought this office because I relished the challenge of making Maui County an even greater place to live and work than it already was, and I wanted to serve the people of Maui County to the fullest extent possible.

After more than a year in office, I can tell you candidly that the job is more intense and more difficult than I had thought it would be, and at the same time, much more gratifying than I could ever have imagined.

I want to thank the Council, our County workers and, most of all, the people of our unique tri-island county for the support you have given me during the first year of my administration. It has been a time for team building and for initiating new programs; a time for responding to community needs and for dealing with the new economic realities of the 1990s.

The experience I have gained over the last year has renewed my belief that government really can make a positive difference in our lives, especially if it is ready and willing to adapt and respond to our rapidly changing world. I believe it is government's responsibility to seek the most effective ways to respond to the vast changes this decade promises to bring.

Recently, I have been reading about a new school of political thought that crystallized, in my mind, a number of principles I had been applying as Mayor. Rather than seeing government as a static institution, this new approach views government as a constantly evolving part of a constantly changing world.

In order for government to be flexible enough to respond to constant change, the idea is that a new entrepreneurial model of government could be developed, one that combines market-based business practices with government's special responsibility to the public. The result is a goal oriented approach to governing--providing people with what they want and need, and doing it more efficiently, effectively and for less money.

This entrepreneurial school of government argues that we must move away from our standardized bureaucracies, with their rigid emphasis on rules and regulations. The focus, instead, should be on results. And that requires having the courage to be

flexible and adaptable, to leave the safe harbor of the status quo to seek more effective methods.

If we are to consider an entrepreneurial approach to governing, then we must understand that the work of our government is driven by the needs of the marketplace--the public. Such an approach requires that we see our residents, visitors, labor unions, non-profit organizations, and businesses as our customers. As any good business would, this approach requires that we offer our customers both workable choices and quality service. It compels us to meet the needs of the marketplace, instead of the needs of the bureaucracy.

Let me be clear on this point. I am not criticizing the hard working, dedicated people who staff our County departments, but rather the stiff, unresponsive structure of bureaucracy. And rather than simply berating bureaucracies, I think it makes sense for us to try to breathe some life into them.

The new kind of government I am reaching for urges us to step beyond the old idea of government as a provider of all services to a passive community. Instead we are striving to turn our citizens into our partners. Working together in public, private, and voluntary partnerships, we can solve our problems, prevent future ones from occurring, and fully utilize our community's tremendous and untapped resources.

One way of creating partnerships is to leverage County tax dollars with community resources to solve a problem or fulfill a need. Leveraging means getting more for our money by using the County's authority and resources to make things happen through other agencies, both public and private. In other words, instead of always paddling the canoe, there are times when County government should act as the steersman. We have already begun to apply this approach in our work with the various communities of Maui County.

The members of my administrative team share this philosophy of government and have shown imagination, intelligence, and seriousness of purpose in the handling of both their day-to-day tasks as well as those unique, one-time events that suddenly thrust themselves on governments. I am proud of their efforts in handling the challenges caused by last July's eclipse; the 15,000-acre Molokai fire; the break in the Kaanapali sewerline; and the Maalaea homeless situation. In each of those instances, we fully leveraged County resources by working together with businesses, labor unions, citizen volunteers, non-profit groups, state agencies and the United States military.

At Christmas time, our community came face-to-face with the pressing social problem generally categorized as homelessness. This is a national problem being experienced by most communities, both large and small. We did what we could for the Maalaea group,

The major goal of my administration is to make Maui County a better place to live, to serve the residents of our diverse communities, and to work with them as partners in achieving our goals. We have taken important steps in that direction over the last year, and we will continue to do so.

We have begun to empower our citizens, moving decision making into the community and away from the bureaucracy. We have begun to focus on results rather than regulations. We are working to be flexible enough to adapt and respond to the rapid changes in our communities. And we take our cues from the needs of our customers--the residents, visitors, non-profit organizations, labor unions, and businesses that make up Maui County.

By working together, we can protect what makes Maui County so special. At the same time, we must reach out to take advantage of the opportunities that the 21st Century will bring us. I am committed to working with you to achieve these goals.

Thank you for your own involvement and for your partnership in building a better Maui County.