

\$144m budget approved

Package
9 percent
larger
than 2012

Following a lively roro (chant) by Appropriations Committee Chairman Senator Mike Kabua to launch a presentation on the fiscal year 2013 budget plan, Enwetak Senator Jack Ading presented the Nitijela Appropriation Committee's report last Friday.

The roro clearly established a favorable environment for the new budget, because despite a number of senators raising objections, the budget passed on second and third readings on the same day.

Ading said the fiscal 2013 budget is about \$12 million more the FY2012 — a nine percent increase.

He said the FY2013 budget proves the government's commitment to cut its expenses and work within the revenue it expects to generate in 2013 through taxes, support from donor countries and government agencies. The government expects an increase in general fund revenues through increased revenue from fishing rights and taxes.

Because of this, the Appropriation Committee recommended some changes to the budget in the following areas, according to Ading:

- The Auditor General's office will be funded through a 0.8 percent deduction from the General Fund and "other development assistance funds."

Under special appropriations:

- A new appropriation of \$25,000 for Constitution Day, which will provide \$20,000 for Majuro and \$5,000 for Kwajalein

- Money from the Ministry of Justice will be transferred to beef up the Marshall Islands Visitors Authority, giving MIVA slightly over \$270,000

- Compact Capital funds will provide about \$600,000 for waste management on Majuro and \$200,000 for waste management on Ebeye. For water and sewage management \$450,000, of



Master weavers Susan Jieta, Ashken Binet, Terse Timothy and Elesana Emos pose with some of the many jaki-ed in USP's library. Photo: Tamara Greenstone.

Miles of mats to go on show

A record number of jaki-ed (clothing mats) will be for sale at the Sixth Annual Jaki-ed Auction and Exhibition being held at the Marshall Islands Resort's Melele Room this Thursday from 7 to 9pm.

The numerous submissions from weavers from USP's novice weaving programs has boosted the numbers to over 50, USP's Tamara Greenstone said.

Following tradition, it's planned that a num-

ber of historic Marshallese mats from Hawaii's Bishop Museum will also be on display at the show. The museum's Marques Marzan, who is a 'fiber artist and 3D weaver' will accompany the mats to Majuro.

which \$300,000 will be for Majuro and the remaining \$150,000 is set for Ebeye.

- Funds from the Asian Development Bank's Social Development and Capital Project will set aside \$570,000 for the school lunch program; \$200,000 for a Wellness Center on Ebeye and \$100,000 for Aid to Private Schools.

- Under transportation the Appropriations Committee recommended \$530,000 to support Our Airline, \$170,000 for Air Marshall Islands to purchase parts and additional \$312,000 to pay off some Air Marshall Islands debts.

The FY2013 budget total of \$144,209,282 did not change from introduction to passage, although internally some of the individual line items were adjusted. Included in these adjustments were two new spending items: \$100,000 for the organizing of next year's Pacific Islands Forum meeting in Majuro, and \$30,864 for MIVA hosting of a Tourism Ministers' meeting next month.

Senators object to money bill

A handful of Majuro Senators and Ailinglaplap Senator Ruben Zackhras, Namdrik's Matt Zackhras, Kessai Note of Jabot were hesitant to pass the budget in its current state.

Majuro Senator Brenson Wase was quick to criticize the 2013 fiscal year budget calling it "a budget that has missing teeth."

"The revenue projections don't equal the actual expenditures," said Wase. "It's better to cut the govern-

ment's expenditures to meet anticipated revenue."

Fellow Majuro Senator David Kramer also expressed his concern about the budget not reflecting the government's true expenses. Kramer said the budget only sets aside \$790,000 for Majuro landowners' electricity subsidy. In actuality, however, the true cost for the government to cover the landowners' electricity is about \$2 million.

"What are we going to do to cover

this shortfall?" asked Kramer.

Tony Muller of Majuro expressed reservations on the budget because the senators did not have FY2011 audit reports to review spending.

But in the end, following a roll call vote, Muller relented on the basis that the government needed a budget to work with.

Note and Mattlan Zackhras abstained three times — abstentions are counted as a "yes" vote.

AMI freight clarification

Air Marshall Islands (AMI) Chief Finance Officer Boris Anni clarified this week that AMI is not increasing cargo rates but is making a change in payment procedure.

Freight, under AMI's new policy, is to be paid for upon arrival in Majuro and not at outer islands locations.

This new procedure is already in effect.

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Mahogany Plywood 1/2" THICK	All Inverter Gasoline GENERATORS	17 lb. bag Kingsford Charcoal
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