



Marshall Islands Visitors Authority
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Coconut Cup Regatta

The 7th Annual Coconut Cup Regatta on April 9 was another successful event for the local Mico Beach Yacht Club with active participation from the local canoe owners including participants from Kwajalein.

Promotions in CNMI

Fifteen individuals representing the government and local handicraft shops in Majuro attended the 24th Annual Flametree Arts Festival held in Saipan on April 15-17. Although this event provided positive exposure for the Marshall Islands, not a lot of handicrafts were sold to the disappointment of the vendors. Overall, the participants were indeed grateful for the experience. Additional in-kind support was provided by MIVA for the participants from the Marshall Islands Association of Handicraft Business.

May Day 2005

The 26th Annual Constitution Day celebrations during the weekend of May 2, was Taiwanese media frenzy thanks to the official state visit of ROC's President Chen Shui-Bian. With approximately 80 staff, security, business representatives, and media, President Chen's trip was indeed an overwhelming experience. The President and Government of the Marshall Islands presented a "korkor" or traditional Marshallese canoe, as a gift to

the President. MIVA assisted in the overall organization of the events.

Annual Festival of Canoes, Maui

The Waan Aelon in Majol Canoe Project, with additional financial assistance from MIVA, participated in the Annual Festival of Canoes in Maui, HI during the last two weeks of May. The team was able to build a traditional Marshallese "korkor" in the allotted time and was one of four on display at the Maui Art and Cultural Center. Approximately 50,000 people attended this prestigious event.

MIVA Media/Familiarization Trips:

- In May 2005, in collaboration with Marshall Islands Tours, Majuro welcomed Mr. Kazuyoshi Miyoshi, a well-renowned photographer from Japan. Escorting Mr. Miyoshi was a writer from Diver Magazine, who will do a feature article documenting the trip in later magazines.
- Pacific Princess' June 6 visit injected approximately \$25,000 in the local economy during the six hours it spent in port Majuro. There were 958 passengers and crew on board. Local businesses that benefited more from the trip included some of the local retail

- stores, handicraft shops/stalls, and taxi/bus services.
- Trip 'n Tours' Mike and Vicky Musto were in Majuro for a one-week excursion with Yokwe Divers and Rongelap Expeditions in mid-June. Their visit was an action packed tour of Majuro and Arno atolls.

Beautifying Majuro

The youth group from the Rita Assembly of God Church, during the months of May and June assisted MIVA by cleaning up and replanting roadside of Rita Village and also repainting the local bus stops. This project was held to have the youth become more aware of the importance of keeping our community clean and beautiful not only for tourism promotion, but mainly for their health and well-being. By participating in the replanting of local indigenous plants, a project in conjunction with WUTMI, the national women's organization in the Marshall Islands, MIVA hopes that the community will realize the value in replanting local trees/plants for land protection and food where in the end, protect them instead of destroying them.

Japan Expo 2005

A delegation from the RMI, headed by Rien Morris, Ministry of Internal Affairs, departed in mid-July to participate in the RMI's National Day at the EXPO. This event has been highly active since March and will continue until late September.

Directly from Japan

A very positive meeting was held between MIVA and Mr. Koji

Mochizuki (Manager of International Passenger Sales Planning Department in the Japan Region for Japan Airlines) to further discuss plans for the long-awaited charter flight from Japan, in collaboration with Mr. Sardha Rasaputra, a Sri-Lankan businessman. Current delays include the fact that the Amata Kabua International Airport needs to be repaved (scheduled for 2006) and additional ground equipment in needed to accommodate JAL' 767 aircraft. The initial flight will carry approximately 125 visitors and 25 tour wholesalers. It is anticipated that this flight will eventually lead to a direct flight from Japan, carrying a minimum passenger load of 150. Travel time will be reduced to 6 hours, instead of the usual, which calls for layovers in Honolulu or Guam. Once the dates have been confirmed, MIVA will send representatives to perform a seminar to potential wholesalers in Japan.

The AKIA Watch:

The Amata Kabua International Airport continues with its major renovations of the terminal building with the repavement of the runway scheduled for later this summer. In May, the snack bar officially opened offering the traveler a nice, cool, and clean eater. It has been decided that MIVA's promotional posters will be located in this area.

PATA Members

MIVA is pleased to note that on July 1, 2005, the Marshall Islands will officially become the new members of the Pacific Asia Travel Association.

A Look at our Visitor Numbers

Visitor arrivals from January through June 2005 show an increase in the number of tourists compared to the same time last, 674 compared to 532 in 2004. Overall visitor arrivals increased dramatically with 3458, compared to last year's 2996, business numbers being the highest with 1229. With information on cruise ship arrivals now available, we are looking at an increase in the number of true holiday visitors, via air and sea in 2005. Important also to note that the number of Japanese tourists in 2004 surpassed the number of US visitors by 200 and we are looking at the possibility of the same thing happening in 2005, especially with the anticipated charter flight from Japan later this year. In 2004, a total of 40 tourists came from Australia. As of June, we have welcomed 88 visitors from Australia and MIVA expects this number to increase further, thanks to Air Nauru.

Cruise Ships and Conferences

Two cruise ships and five conferences were held and hosted in the Marshall Islands, providing an estimated \$300,000 in visitor expenditures into the RMI economy this year.

