



Marshall Islands Visitors Authority

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Media and Fam Trips:

Australia Dive Group- In collaboration with Air Nauru, Yokwe Divers, and Rongelap Expeditions, MIVA hosts another group of 10 dive enthusiasts (dive shop owners and wholesalers) from Australia. The group spent three days of diving in Majuro and Arno and also spent an evening on the luxurious Oleanda.

Marine Diving Magazine: Two travel writers from Marine Diving magazine visited Majuro for a four-day trip in late February. Satoshi Yoshii, MIVA's Japan Consultant, assisted MIVA in organizing the trip.

A look at our Statistics

The 2004 visitor statistics showed a 2.5% decrease in the number of total visitors (via air) into Majuro, 7,022 compared to 2003's 7,200 while the number of true holiday visitors continue to increase with 1,470 in 2004, compared to 1,445 in 2003. This year, MIVA was able to record sea arrivals (cruise ships only), which resulted in a total of 9,007 visitors to Majuro. MIVA is expecting record numbers in 2005 with three scheduled cruise ship visits, more dive groups mainly to Bikini and Rongelap, the possibility of a direct flight from Japan plus other activities.

Drums for Clean-Up Efforts

MIVA receives a donation of 50 fuel drums from MOBIL-Majuro to be

utilized for trash bins. These bins will be placed not only in picnic areas around Majuro but also in the busier commercial areas of Uliga and Delap.

Sustainable Tourism Development?

Chin-Fu Shipbuilding Company, based in Taiwan, has proposed to erect a floating dry-dock facility in the vicinity of Uliga Village by the old dock. This project has raised major concerns from the people of Majuro, especially the landowners and tenants in Uliga Village, as the RMI Government continues to uphold information. The RMI-EPA office has since issued a statement saying that nothing will proceed unless an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is performed, along with public hearings and other communal activities. MIVA, as the tourism promotions office, will do as much as possible to discourage the development of such a project.

Visa Issues...

MIVA has been working aggressively with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Attorney General's Office, and the Department of Immigrations for the past few months to correct certain problems regarding VISA issuance and passport regulations for foreign visitors, especially our visitors from Japan. All visitors (except listed countries) do not require a VISA to enter the RMI; a 30-day VISA is issued upon entry and an additional VISA will require a payment

of \$25. Apparently, the RMI Embassy in Japan has been issuing VISA's and in some cases, charging the Japanese visitors. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs had issued a statement relative to MIVA policy and yet this problem has not been corrected. As for passports, MIVA has just recently come to learn that all airborne visitors, aside from the US and Micronesia, must have a passport that is at least one year valid before entering the RMI – for security reasons. This policy has been in effect since 1994 but unfortunately, MIVA was not aware of it. MIVA is still awaiting a copy of the RMI Travel Policy from the Attorney General's Office and full confirmation on VISA issuance from the RMI Embassy in Japan before revising all published information regarding this.

Bus Murals Project Continued

Laura village (Majuro Atoll) bus stops' have finally been completed. MIVA is looking at more support from the local councilmen in the distribution of paint and assistance with the painting itself. MIVA is also asking for local support from the communities in keeping these bus murals clean.

e-Marketing

The Marshall Islands in Hawaii.com's Magnificent Micronesia site saw an increase in the month of February by 37%. The continuous increase in the number of visits, along with positive exposure in Scuba Diving.com and Expedia.com, has led to more positive support from MIVA's Board of Directors who has since approved MIVA's continuation on the site for 2005/6.

Events:

- 7th Annual Coconut Cup Regatta, April 9 – financial support from MIVA towards the overall organization of this event. Expecting more participation from local canoe owners and operators and yachts from Kwajalein.
- 24th Annual Flametree Arts Festival in Saipan, April 15-17 – additional support from MIVA for the participants from the Marshall Islands Association of Handicraft Business.
- 26th Annual Constitution Day celebration May 2 – MIVA assisting in the overall organization of the event as the country is expected to receive high-end officials from Taiwan-ROC and the United States.
- 9th Annual Marshall Islands National Cup Race May 6-7 – financial organizational support from MIVA. More canoes of all categories expected to participate in this annual traditional canoe race.

Upcoming Events:

- Annual Festival of Canoes in Maui, HI May-June – financial support from MIVA; to be attended by the Waan Aelon in Majol (Canoes of the Marshall Islands) Project. WAM will assist MIVA by distributing tourism information and displaying/selling handicrafts at their booth.
- Pacific Princess June 6 – first of two scheduled trips for this year.