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Dreams Come True In Blue Hawaii

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As a University of Hawaii Alum, how does it feel to be back in Hawai'i to serve as Administrator to the state's emergency management agency?

It has been an honor to come back to the State of Hawaii and serve as the Administrator of HI-EMA. As a UH Alum, there are so many partnerships and connections with the team herein all phases of emergency management. We have several recent projects on the hazard mitigation front that connect friend and faces from the past to reducing a number of threats here in the islands. The UH system has connections throughout each county and island and those partnerships are vital for our larger whole community approach in our state.

What makes you proudest of your team at HI-EMA?

I started as Administrator on March 16, 2020, as COVID-19 was just starting to upend normal business and life out here in Hawai'i. The HI-EMA Team has been through tremendous stress from a wide range of incidents in 2018, ongoing recovery and mitigation efforts, and long-term program vacancies. From top to bottom, we have had one team member after another step up and into COVID-19 response. With 10 plus open federal disasters and COVID-19 operations, the team has been adapting, agile, and willing to learn. Their consistent dedication in producing 55 Incident Action Plans, 338 Situation Reports, and Daily Common Operating Pictures is a true reflection of their commitment to the State of Hawaii.

What advice would you give to a new NEMA member?

Get to know and make as many connections as possible. It is always better to have had a relationship with a stakeholder before an incident causes impact. NEMA has a wealth of resources from all the partners and provides professional development opportunities through in-person and virtual networking. The [NEMA website](#) is a valuable tool for challenges that you will be facing!

How long have you been flying quadcopters? What is your best quadcopter story?

I have been flying quadcopter for about 4 years. This is the one that we can't fly in yet! I own several DJI quadcopters. The technology is changing fast and has broad implications for many ways we do business. I have always loved geography and maps, and the view from the above, provides a new perspective on how get where we are going or what we need to accomplish. When living in the Puget Sound on a cool crisp morning, I would love to fly about at dawn and capture the views of Mt. Rainier and the valleys and hills in Pierce County (WA). The challenge in the Sound is the fog, and when you mix that with freezing or temperatures just above you can have issues with a small device. With my quad rising a few hundred feet above me, I had entered a fog layer not knowing the depth, I tried to push through to get to the view. I lost sight of the quad, but more importantly a few of the blades iced over! As I peak through the fog deck, I heard a horrible noise, like a plane crashing. It was a strange sound when something is going round and round in the air, very slowly! My camera view was on and all I could see was the backyard and the deck getting closer and closer. The quad hit the deck, cracked my frame, but I learned good newbie lessons about icing and wings!

What's the biggest adventure you have been on?

My wife and I married in summer of 2000. At that time, we were still living in Hawaii. Well as an east coast kid my parents would pack us in the car and do long summer drive trips, I had missed that after 6 years in Hawaii. So, before we got married, we flew from Hawaii to California, rented a Ford Explorer in May 2000 and spent the next 62 days on the road. We went up the west coast along I-5 all the way to Vancouver, BC. We came back down took I-90 across the norther tier and went around the Great Lakes and end up in Toronto before making it to Freeport, Maine. From there, we visited family and sites from New York to South Carolina all the way down to Miami on I-95. Then we headed back north and due west along I-10, where we ended on up in Las Vegas in late June. We got married on July 3, 2000 at the Little Chapel of Flowers. We drove back to Los Angeles and the next day and flew back to Hawaii. It was best pre-honeymoon I could ever imagine. I love driving and seeing what is out there. We stayed in hotels, motels, and with family. We didn't have the same technology as today but did use a mobile service to keep cell connection way back then. In the end we put about 13K plus miles on the Ford Explorer!

If a new volcano formed and the government had an online contest to see what it would be named, what name would you submit?

I would defer to the experts and community that name these through the State Board of Geographic Names. That would be a fun board to be on!

Once you have tasted flight, you will forever walk the earth with your eyes turned skyward, for there you have been, and there you will always long to return.

- Leonardo da Vinci



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