

# money



**REARVIEW MIRROR**  
Years ago Okinawan immigrants opened many restaurants in Hawaii >> B3

ON THE MOVE >> B2  
STOCKS >> B4

## State officials pushed on pakalolo wait

*The Health Department tells legislators patients will get cannabis cards online*

By Kristen Consillio  
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The state will start an on-line application system for medical marijuana patients in mid-November, pledging to alleviate a substantial backlog in the 15-year program.

Health Department officials told lawmakers at a briefing Thursday that the new electronic process being tested will "greatly decrease the delays" between the time patients apply and actually receive the cards. Currently, the DOH does not allow patients to use medical canna-

bis until they receive the cards.

The joint hearing at the state Capitol was called by the House Committee on Health and the Senate Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection and Health to discuss the new medical marijuana dispensary law that will allow pot to be sold legally by licensed dispensaries start-

ing July 15.

The existing paper-based process has led to significant delays for patients who regularly wait as long as two to three months to receive their registration cards, according to local doctors.

"We have cancer patients who are suffering needlessly," said Dr. Clifton Otto, an Oahu physician who certifies fewer than 100 medical

marijuana patients a year. "They're waiting until their registration cards arrive, which is completely unnecessary. Cannabis actually has the potential to be lifesaving for cancer patients if it's started soon enough. There's absolutely no reason why they should wait one day."

Lawmakers questioned

Please see MARIJUANA, B2

## Mixed signals from the feds put pot sellers in sticky spot

Associated Press

**DENVER >>** Colorado's attempt to create a bank to service its marijuana industry has suffered another setback by the federal government and could be facing an impossible dilemma.

The Federal Reserve — the guardian of the U.S. banking system — said in a court filing Wednesday that it doesn't intend to accept a penny connected to the sale of pot because the drug remains illegal under federal law.

The stance appears to mark a shift in the position

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NORTH SHORE-BASED PHOTOGRAPHER STARTS SELLING HIS PICTURES AT NORDSTROM / PAGE B2



good-paying jobs as well. For the bank, we foresee good, steady improvement in loans and deposits, and that's what drives our business."

Harrison said commercial and industrial loans (which are made to businesses for working capital or to finance capital expenditures) have shown the most strength in the bank's lending portfolio, with residential and consumer loans close behind.

The bank's nonperforming assets, or loans considered past due and in danger of being written off, plunged 35.1 percent to \$20.7 million from \$31.9 million in the year-earlier quarter. Nonperforming assets as a percentage of total assets declined to 0.11 percent from 0.18 percent over the same period.

"Our asset quality is probably the best I can ever recall," Harrison said. "That's just a reflection of the stron-

ber of residential loans working their way through the process, and as they're worked through, we've seen NPAs drop from \$32 million to \$21 million."

Net interest income edged up 0.9 percent to \$113.5 million from \$112.5 million in the year-earlier quarter, while the bank's net interest margin (the spread between loan/securities and deposits) declined to 2.72 percent from 2.89 percent.

Noninterest income, which includes money earned from service charges and fees, rose 8.7 percent to \$56.5 million from \$52 million.

As a wholly owned subsidiary of French banking giant BNP Paribas, First Hawaiian is not required to separately report its earnings, but does so voluntarily each quarter. The bank has 57 branches in Hawaii, three on Guam and two on Saipan.



COURTESY PHOTO

**Lia Clark**

>> **Lia Clark**, a Realtor-associate, has joined the firm as an independent agent. She is licensed in Hawaii and California, where she continues to serve as a Realtor-associate with Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage.



COURTESY PHOTO

**Linda Griffith**

>> **Linda Griffith** has joined the firm as a sales coordinator. She was previously a boutique administrator at Cartier.

nancial services for, and the financial transparency of, marijuana-related businesses."

But by allowing pot industry money to mingle with

**MARIJUANA**

*Continued from B1*

Health Department officials, who took over the program from the Department of Public Safety on Jan. 1, as to why they aren't willing to issue temporary cards as the previous administrator did so that patients can get their medicines immediately.

"The bottom line is, this was the current practice in the Department of Public Safety. Why is that not possible now if it was possible in another department of state government? I'm having a hard time wrapping my head around that," said state Sen. Roz Baker (D, South Maui-West Maui). "Rather than helping patients, you are putting in another barrier that wasn't there. ... So how do we fix this?"

Peter Whitticar, chief of the Health Department's STD/AIDS Prevention Branch, which administers the medical marijuana patient registry, tried to reason with lawmakers that temporary cards could "very easily be forged" and put patients at risk.

The Health Department receives about 1,000 applications per month, which will take them about a month to work through partly because of staffing is-

left Colorado's marijuana industry in a bind. Many shops still operate in cash, unable to accept credit cards or make other electronic transactions.



**Rather than helping patients, you are putting in another barrier that wasn't there. ... So how do we fix this?"**

**Roz Baker**  
*State senator (D, South Maui-West Maui)*

sues and the failure of applicants to complete forms correctly.

"We're trying to work that down with overtime, and we're hoping to get it down to less than 500 in one month," he said. "That means cards should be going out in two weeks if they're correctly completing them."

However, legislators weren't completely satisfied with the department's fix.

"You're singling out medical cannabis. This has nothing to do with law enforcement," said state Sen. Will Espero (D, Ewa Beach-Ocean Pointe-Iroquois Point). "Nowhere does it say we want to be an impediment or obstacle for a patient to get their medicine. With temporary registrations there was not the

case, U.S. District Judge R. Brooke Jackson in Denver, has given no indication when he'll decide whether to hear the complaint filed by Fourth Corner.

delay that we have now."

State Rep. Della Au Belatti (D, Makiki-Tantalus-Papa-kolea) warned health officials that if the new online system doesn't work as planned, "we will make legislation to require you to allow for temporary registrations."

The DOH said it is creating online video instructions for applicants and will cut out the need for doctors to print and mail hard-copy applications, which must be sent back to physicians for their signatures before being distributed to patients. The system also will pre-fill information for previous applicants and will have an electronic payment option. With electronic signatures the department will be able to send cards directly to patients.

"These are steps we believe will speed up the system and hopefully increase accuracy of the applications. We know there's been a lot of pressure to get cards out," Whitticar said. "We realize there are patients with debilitating conditions. Our approach is to create a system where they do get the cards quickly — a lot faster than license renewal from the city and county and pre-approval from security at the airport. We tried to make it as error-proof as possible."

**SHIP AHOY!**

Today's ship arrivals and departures:

**HONOLULU HARBOR**

AGENT	VESSEL	FROM	ETA	ETD	BERTH	DESTINATION
PHT	Horizon Navigator	--	--	5 a.m.	51A	Oakland, Calif.
TNC	Crown Princess	Hilo	6 a.m.	11:30 p.m.	10	Lahaina, Maui
WNLI	Carnival Miracle	Kahului	7:45 a.m.	11 p.m.	02B	Nawiliwili, Kauai
MNC	Mahimahi	--	--	3 p.m.	52A	Long Beach, Calif.
TNC	Nord Steady	--	--	8 p.m.	30	Canada

**Dilbert** >> By Scott Adams

