



MARIANAS VISITORS AUTHORITY
News Release

Tourism is Everybody's Business!

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MTEC/MY WAVE TOURISM SUMMIT ATTRACTS 250 STUDENTS

Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands (NMI) – Almost 250 elementary, junior high, and high school students convened yesterday (Oct. 30) at the MTEC/MY WAVE Tourism Summit at Pacific Islands Club Saipan in emphasis that “tourism is everybody’s business.”

The summit, organized by the Marianas Tourism Education Council (MTEC) and school Marianas Youth Welcome All Visitors Enthusiastically (MY WAVE) clubs, presented a number of guest speakers – including students - who challenged the participants to become actively engaged in the primary industry of the Northern Mariana Islands.

“I can’t tell you how impressed I am that you young people are getting the opportunity to get together and listen to people in the tourism industry,” said Office of Insular Affairs (OIA) Assistant Secretary Tony Babauta. “Everyone who is part of the tourism industry in Saipan should be proud of you.”

Babauta also emphasized the unique cultural characteristics of the Northern Marianas that set it apart from other beach resort destinations and encouraged the students to explore careers in the visitor industry.

“We are all capable of doing whatever it is we want to do. I have a little girl, and I

always told her that she can be anything she wants and she can do whatever she wants to do, but she has to put the work into it,” he told students.

Dr. Miriam J.S. Leis, a strategic foresight analyst specializing in the interrelation of emerging technologies, innovation, society, politics, and future studies who has worked on projects for the European Commission, challenged students to think strategically about the industry and get personally involved with visitors.

“Keeping our island clean and safe, protecting our environment, and respecting other cultures and our own cultures...” Leis said. “When you go home, you can think about your ideas, and maybe share them with your teachers.”

Hopwood Jr. High MY WAVE Club President Joana Garcia and Vice President Crystal Lloren also shared about their club’s activities this school year.

“MY WAVE is truly important to the CNMI because it helps tourism, and tourism is the main source of cash in the islands,” said Lloren. “Our advisors care about our club, and it is one of the most active clubs in the school.”

Saipan Southern High MY WAVE Club President Bertran Palacios and Treasurer Issac Tenorio, who have been MY WAVE Club members for four years, shared their experiences with other students and some practice suggestions to improve the visitors industry.

“Don’t give tourists problems. Always treat them with respect,” said Tenorio.

CNMI’s Representative to the U.S. Congress, Gregorio Kili Sablan addressed the group in the morning. MTEC Board Member and Northern Marianas College Business and Tourism Instructor Larry Lee quizzed students on the Northern Marianas visitor industry. Rep. Edmund Villagomez, Chairman of the Committee on Resources & Tourism, delivered welcoming remarks. Other MY WAVE Club presidents also gave abbreviated reports of their plans and activities.

“We extend our thanks to OIA, the Marianas Visitors Authority, and the Public School System for their support,” said MTEC Chairman Vicky Benavente. “Kids getting involved in tourism is where we start, and we hope to keep their interest about the tourism and hospitality industry going throughout their lives.”

Participating schools were San Antonio Elementary, Koblerville Elementary, Saipan

Southern High, Hopwood Jr. High, W.S. Reyes Elementary, Kagman High, Chacha Oceanview Jr. High, Marianas High, and Garapan Elementary. Entertainment was provided by Saipan Music and Dance Studio. This year's MTEC/MY WAVE Tourism Summit was funded by a grant from the OIA. Giveaways were also donated by DFS Saipan.



Hopwood Jr. High MY WAVE Club Advisor Jenn Castro emceeds the MTEC/MY WAVE Tourism Summit on Oct. 30, 2012, at Pacific Islands Club Saipan.



Participants in the MTEC/MY WAVE Tourism Summit on Oct. 30, 2012, at Pacific Islands Club Saipan sing the national anthem.



From left, John Michael Casilla, David Waki, and Jan Marvin Morera of Hopwood Jr. High sing the national anthem at the MTEC/MY WAVE Tourism Summit on Oct. 30, 2012, at Pacific Islands Club Saipan.



CNMI Rep. Edmund Villagomez, Chairman of the House Committee on Commerce and Tourism, delivered welcoming remarks at the MTEC/MY WAVE Tourism Summit on Oct. 30, 2012, at Pacific Islands Club Saipan.



Mixed TNT of Marianas High School performs the MY WAVE cheer at the MTEC/MY WAVE Tourism Summit on Oct. 30, 2012, at Pacific Islands Club Saipan.



Dr. Miriam J.S. Leis of Tokyo, Japan, a strategic foresight analyst who has worked with the European Commission, addresses students at the MTEC/MY WAVE Tourism Summit on Oct. 30, 2012, at Pacific Islands Club Saipan.



Saipan Southern High MY WAVE Club President Bertran Palacios shares about club activities at the MTEC/MY WAVE Tourism Summit on Oct. 30, 2012, at Pacific Islands Club Saipan.



Saipan Southern High MY WAVE Club Treasurer Isaac Tenorio shares ideas with students on how to promote tourism at the MTEC/MY WAVE Tourism Summit on Oct. 30, 2012, at Pacific Islands Club Saipan.



CNMI's Representative to the U.S. Congress Gregorio Kilili Sablan interacts with students at the MTEC/MY WAVE Tourism Summit on Oct. 30, 2012, at Pacific Islands Club Saipan.



Office of Insular Affairs Assistant Secretary Tony Babauta challenges students to aim high in the tourism industry at the MTEC/MY WAVE Tourism Summit on Oct. 30, 2012, at Pacific Islands Club Saipan.



Garapan Elementary students perform a poem in Chamorro and dance at the MTEC/MY WAVE Tourism Summit on Oct. 30, 2012, at Pacific Islands Club Saipan.



Hopwood Jr. High MY WAVE Club President Joana Garcia shares about club plans for the school year at the MTEC/MY WAVE Tourism Summit on Oct. 30, 2012, at Pacific Islands Club Saipan.



MY WAVE Club officials and MTEC board members, and VIPS pose for a commemorative photo at the MTEC/MY WAVE Tourism Summit on Oct. 30, 2012, at Pacific Islands Club Saipan.



MTEC Chairman Vicky Benavente delivers closing remarks and a final challenge to students at the MTEC/MY WAVE Tourism Summit on Oct. 30, 2012, at Pacific Islands Club Saipan.

The Northern Mariana Islands of Saipan, Tinian, and Rota are a chain of idyllic islands in the West Pacific, offering a friendly, fun and exciting vacation in paradise. They are an excellent destination for families, adventure and sports-minded travelers, as well as business people looking for a tropical haven. Adventurous travelers from Asia, Australia, Europe and elsewhere looking for new travel discoveries will find them in the Mariana Islands, just three hours travel from most cities in Japan, and four from Asia and Australia. The Northern Marianas are served from Tokyo, Nagoya, and Osaka in Japan by Delta Air Lines and Asiana Airlines. From Korea, Asiana provides direct flights from Seoul and Busan. China visitors arrive direct from Shanghai, Guangzhou and Beijing. For more information visit www.mymarianas.com.

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