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## Local economist sees bright future for O'ahu's '2nd city'

*Advertiser Staff*

Although the economy here and across the country continues to slump, Kapolei is a "growth hot spot" that could help stabilize the state's economy, according to economist Leroy Laney.

Laney made those remarks yesterday at the inaugural meeting of the Kapolei Chamber of Commerce. He offered an economic forecast of O'ahu's "second city" and painted a bright future for the community, saying it will represent a "boom amidst a national bust."

The region's population will grow from 85,000 now to about 172,000 in 2025, which Laney said would be more than the current populations of Maui or Hawai'i counties. Jobs are expected to nearly triple over the same time to nearly 70,000, he said.

Laney said economic activity generated by new development in Kapolei will be about \$93 billion.

"Thanks to activity in Kapolei, we're likely to see less volatile swings in statewide employment, personal income growth and tax revenues," Laney said. "As Kapolei transforms into an urban center, it will be a source of jobs for people who live in the area and a provider of a full range of private and public goods and services for local residents, visitors and businesses in Kapolei and beyond."

Business leaders in the community formed the new chamber to encourage and facilitate this growth. Yesterday, Mayor Mufi Hannemann installed the chamber's board members during ceremonies at Kapolei Hale.

The new officers are Attilio Leonardi Jr., president; Jeffrey Ashmore, vice president; Christine Camp, vice president; Dave Rae, vice president; Greg Sitar, vice president-finance; Theresia McMurdo, vice president-administration; and Cameron Nekota, vice president-legal counsel.