



**Great Grads**  
Read the success story on P25

**Marshall Islands at the Pacific Games:** See page 4  
**Support 16 Days of Activism:** Why it's important, page 13

# Nail-biting numbers

## Will the postal votes be key to some races?

**GIFF JOHNSON**

How much will the postal absentee ballots now streaming into the RMI post office change the domestic vote results?

For some atolls, the postal ballots will be pivotal: Namo by latest result from the Electoral Administration is showing incumbent Tony Aiseia holding a slim two-vote lead over challenger Ace Doulatram; 12 votes separate challenger Marie Milne from incumbent John Silk in Ebon, with Marie up 346 to 334; only 15 votes separate Tommy Kijiner, leading, from Chris deBrum at Likiep. Multiple close mayors' races may also be upended by the postal count.

But that is a question that will not be answered until sometime after December 4 — next week Monday, the deadline for arrival of postal absentee ballots.

Virtually every United Airlines and Asia Pacific Airlines flight is bringing postal absentee ballots back to the Marshall Islands from voters living abroad.

While the late arrival of postal ballots to hundreds of Marshallese living in the US and elsewhere has sparked an outpouring of criticism on social media, hundreds of ballots are arriving to be counted after December 4.

The big question, however, is this: If 40 percent of all ballot applications were rejected by the Electoral Administration for various reasons, how many of the expected more than 3,000 postal ballots will similarly be rejected by the Electoral Administration and not be counted?

Ballots can fail for multiple reasons: They were mailed after the November 19 postal deadline; the affidavit was not properly filled out or notarized; the prospective voter's name on the affidavit is

**Continued page 2**



## Marshalls election shows big shakeup

**GIFF JOHNSON**

The Marshall Islands still unofficial domestic election result shows at least one-third of the 33-seat parliament are likely to change when the body is sworn in during early January. Five incumbents lost on the domestic vote, while six incumbents stepped down creating open seats for newcomers. Those 11 could become 13: Ebon's six-term incumbent, John Silk, was behind by 12 to challenger Marie Milne and incumbent Tony Aiseia was ahead by just two votes over challenger Ace Doulatram based on unofficial counts released Wednesday afternoon this week by the Electoral Administration.

The domestic vote result, of course, comes with a big asterisk: Until the offshore postal ballots are counted in early December, the vote result is not final.

An anachronistic law from the early 1980s allows postal ballots to arrive up to 14 days after

**Continued page 2**

**The Post Office's Nelson Kilo, who is deputy to the Postmaster General Dexter Jikit, with some of secure postal ballot boxes. Photo: Hilary Hosia.**

# Spotlight on WAM at COP28

**GIFF JOHNSON**

One of the RMI's most sustainable, climate-focused programs will showcase its work at the global climate summit — COP28 — starting this week in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates.

A small team from Waan Aelon in Majel — Canoes of the Marshall Islands — will be featured at the Blue Pacific Pavilion in Dubai during the two-week summit that will bring thousands of people together.

"The RMI delegation will be presenting its National Adaptation Plan," said WAM Director Alson Kelen, who is heading the team of several WAM staff in Dubai. "They'll be talking about adaptation. WAM needs to be there to tell our story about what and how we're adapting."

All Pacific islands will be represented at the Blue Pacific Pavilion, he said. "The Pacific community is the best place to start talking about our program. We're going to show the world,

but at the same time we want to share with Pacific people. We're all ocean people. We share the ocean and the same skills. It's how we survived."

Kelen said many other islands in the region are interested in the WAM program that has been experimenting with vessels designed especially for different atoll and island environments in the RMI. All use wind power, making them zero carbon transport options. In addition, WAM has trialed a solar

powered outboard engine on one of its vessels over the past year to develop optimal use of the engine as a hybrid addition to wind-powered vessels.

"We're bringing in traditional skills for the younger generation as well as providing sustainable transport (for the country)," he said. "We will have a better future by utilizing knowledge of our ancestors."

He pointed out that in the 21st century, people focus on

**Continued page 2**