

Guam requires final delegation



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With just over 26 more weeks before the 12th Festival of Pacific Arts in Guam, things are moving at quite a hectic pace. The start of construction for the new Festival Village kicked off with a ground-breaking ceremony held last week. The Festival Village will feature 34 huts and will be located between the Paseo Stadium and Chamorro Village. The event team will assign each participating country a hut to display their wares and demonstrate their arts and crafts.

This week another ground-breaking ceremony took place for the Great Seal of Guam Park adjacent to the Paseo Loop — a great place for picture taking and historical perspective on the origin of our island seal for our delegates!

We have already had site visits by four participating countries and this week we welcomed Fiona Yule, director of Indigenous Languages and Arts Section and Amy Moon, contact for the Australian delegation. We hosted the visitors during a three-day whirlwind of meetings and a tour of our venues. They met with our programming committees, visited some of the facilities and also briefed with festival director Rose Ramsey. In 1988, we visited Australia as they hosted the Festival in Townsville, with over 1,700 participants from 24 Pacific island countries and territo-



ries.

As event coordinators, we are excited that the mainstream community is now holding the festival as a topic of discussion, centralizing and focusing on island preparations as the event draws near.

In the meantime, our programming committee has placed identifying and finalizing of our Guam delegation as top priority! Our various committees have busied themselves with conducting auditions since our first callout in July, and the deadline for completing their list of delegates is fast approaching.

As hosts for the festival, our delegation will be capped at 500 in the five artistic disciplines of performing, literary, visual and traditional arts as well as forums, workshops and seminars. Please log on to our website at www.guamfestpac2016.com for a breakdown on all the genres within these disciplines and the application form, which is due Nov. 27.

The selection process is no easy task and many thanks go out to those volunteers who have spearheaded this effort. From developing the selection criteria, to ensuring community outreach, to actually conducting the auditions, we are fortunate to have some very dedicated individuals who have a passion and a love for our art and culture.

With generous support from United, the official airline of the festival, our discipline chairs were able to meet to conduct auditions last month with their corresponding diaspora teams in the states. Meeting face to face also provided an opportunity for dialogue and exchange, discussing the principles of the festival and how we as a community want to present culture to the rest of the Pacific. Throughout the intense four days, the overarching theme was the spirit of Inafa'maolek, or as Guampedia defines it, "the Chamorro concept of restoring harmony" and the spirit of cooperation with our guest delegates.

This concept of Inafa'maolek lies at the very core of our culture and must be instilled at all levels of our organization and participation in the festival. This event is much more than just the sharing of cultures, it is the harmonious gathering and building of awareness of how each culture is important and integral to the well-being of all the people of Oceania.

Biba FestPac! Biba Oceania! Biba Guam!

Monica Okada Guzman, is chair of the Guam Council on the Arts and Humanities.