

# Excitement builds



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## High schools get calls from White House

By Amritha Alladi

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When Southern High School Principal James Pettite received a phone call from a White House official yesterday afternoon, he thought he'd been prank called.

The caller identified himself as a White House official and invited 15 Southern High School students and 15 others from the school to see President Obama during his visit to Guam next week.

On Tuesday, Ben Rhodes, deputy national security adviser for strategic communications, said the president would be arriving on Guam March 22, and will host a public event on Guam Monday night.

He also confirmed the president will stay on Guam overnight, and then travel on to Jakarta and Bali, then on to Australia for a five-day tour of the Asia-Pacific region.

"He will be hosting a public event, where he'll be able to speak to ... the

**Go Sharks!:** Simon Sanchez High School administrators show their enthusiasm for the anticipated visit by President Barack Obama, yesterday. From left are Assistant Principal Arvi Bacani, Assistant Principal Acie Jo Sablan Cruz, Principal Lourdes San Nicolas, Assistant Principal Rick Leon Guerrero and administrative assistant Jerome Tomagan.

## Local officials bewildered by lack of advance notice

By Steve Limtiaco

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President Obama is expected to arrive on Guam Monday for an overnight visit, but details about his trip remain sketchy, even to the governor and other local officials.

"This is very unusual that not a single bit of information has gone out," said Speaker Judith Won Pat, who said she isn't aware of any specific gatherings or meetings involving the president. "At least let us know if he's going to be speaking out in the community or in the base."

If the president plans to meet with the governor, lawmakers or other lo-

cal government officials, they didn't know anything about it yesterday.

Guam Delegate Madeleine Bordallo's office yesterday was waiting for more details from the White House, including whether Bordallo would be flying with the president to Guam on Air Force One.

Attorney General Alicia Limtiaco, who was nominated by Obama as the next U.S. Attorney for Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, hasn't been invited to attend any event with the president, according to her office.

Based on information available yesterday, a speech by the president



Obama

# Community: White House calls lift school spirits

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community in Guam and of course some of the military personnel that the United States has in Guam," Rhodes said.

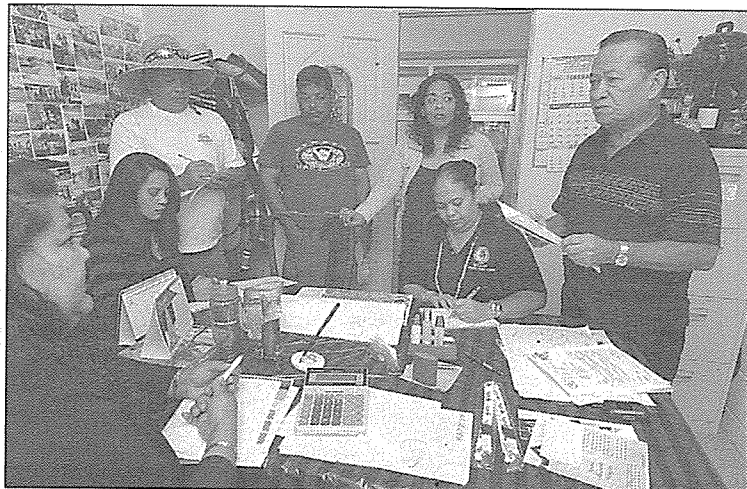
Although the details of where and when the school students will get to see the president haven't been disclosed, just the call from the White House was enough to lift Petite's spirits, he said.

"It's actually very humbling to be called by someone from the White House," he said, adding that the opportunity for some students to see the president "boosts their morale which, at this point, they could really use right now."

As the afternoon passed, other high school principals yesterday reported to Guam Department of Education Superintendent Nerissa Bretania Underwood, that they, too, had received similar calls.

Lourdes San Nicolas, principal of Simon Sanchez High School in Yigo, said she was absolutely stunned when she got the call from White House intern Paul Chong, who told her to provide a list of about 30 people, 15 of whom are students, to attend President Obama's rally on Monday evening.

"We're so lucky," she said yesterday. "What a joy. I couldn't believe it."



Masako Watanabe/Pacific Daily News/mwatanabe@guampdn.com

**Preparations:** Tamuning-Tumon Mayor Francisco Blas, right, and Vice Mayor Louise Rivera, left, talk to their staff yesterday about President Obama's anticipated visit to Guam. Rivera said "it would be a huge honor" to meet the president. The mayor's office will make sure the roads are clear of trash and roadkill, she said.

She figured if anything of that magnitude were to happen, it would be the DOE that would be communicating the message to the schools.

"I consider it an honor, an extreme honor, to be getting a call from the White House," Lourdes San Nicolas said.

Hours after she received the call, she and her administrative team were already meeting and cheering

over the good news

To show their school's pride, she said the students would make several banners welcoming the president to Guam, and dress in their school's uniforms for the event.

"We'll solicit further input from students on how they want to show our school," she said.

John F. Kennedy High School principal Ken Chargualaf also con-

firmed his students had been invited.

Students from Okkodo were invited as well, according to Underwood. An invitation to George Washington High School could not be confirmed as of press time yesterday.

Others in the community said the call from the White House was an honor not only because they would get to see the president, but because their organization was being recognized by the leader of the United States.

For example, Heidi San Nicolas, director of the Guam Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education Research and Service at the University of Guam, said when she received her call, she was told the CEDDERS on Guam had been "doing good things on the island," and that the president wanted members from CEDDERS to be represented on Monday.

She too, said she wasn't given information on what the format of the meeting would be.

It's because details of the president's visit are still under wraps that the Yigo, Dededo and Tamuning village mayors are on their toes to keep their streets clean in case the president's motorcade sweeps through their thoroughfares next week.

Tamuning Vice Mayor Louise Rivera said her office is working with the Guam Visitors Bureau to keep the Tumon area in "tip-top" shape.

Yigo Mayor Robert Lizama said he was working to paint over graffiti along Routes 1 and 29, and "sprucing up" the landscape with grass and bush cutting.

Dededo Mayor Melissa Savares said there weren't enough U.S. and Guam flags in the office supply stores to line the major roads the president might possibly be traveling come Monday. All she can do for now is ask contract workers to remove roadkill and junked cars from the streets, and maintain the landscapes along Routes 3 and 9, and the intersection of Routes 1 and 3, she said.

Savares said she believes the president will want to drive through the areas identified for the new base to be built in the Finegayan area.

Unlike then-President Bill Clinton's visit to Guam in 1998, which entailed eight months of preparation, this visit by Obama was arranged with little prior notification, she said.

During Clinton's visit, Guam's international airport had at least several months of coordination with the White House on security arrangements, according to airport Marketing Administrator Rolenda Lujan Faasuumalie.

Air Force One most likely will land on Guam at Andersen Air Force Base, though base officials hadn't confirmed the president's arrival as of Wednesday.