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PRESS RELEASE
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County of Maui shuts down Lava Rock Bar & Grill for 24 hours for physical distancing violations

The County of Maui Department of Liquor Control shut down the Lava Rock Bar & Grill in Kihei for a 24-hour period this weekend after physical distancing violations were observed during an enforcement operation conducted in conjunction with the Maui Police Department.

The enforcement operation was conducted Friday night at the Kihei Kalama Village complex to curtail fights and loitering outside in parking lot areas. The complex was also the site of a recent assault of an off-duty Maui Police officer that left him with life-threatening injuries.

Liquor Control officers participated in the operation and observed social distancing violations while inspecting the Lava Rock establishment. Lava Rock management was given a warning, and when Liquor Control officers returned they saw continuing violations.

MPD was contacted to stand by while Lava Rock was issued a citation, which shut down the establishment for 24 hours, which meant it was closed on Saturday.

Department of Liquor Control Director Layne Silva said the 24-hour shutdown was a public health and safety precaution. "Our officers are working under the public health emergency rules to enforce measures to limit the spread of COVID-19 in our community," Silva said.

"Mahalo to Department of Liquor Control officers and Maui police officers for carrying out this enforcement operation," Mayor Michael Victorino said. "This should set example for all liquor establishments that public disorder and violations of public health emergency rules will not be tolerated in Maui County."

"We are also very concerned with last week's reports of double-digit positive COVID-19 cases in Maui County," Mayor Victorino said. "Maui District Health Officer Dr. Lorrin Pang reports that many of the positive

cases were tied directly or indirectly to close interactions among patrons at bars or restaurants with bar areas. Dr. Pang is concerned that bar patrons are removing their face masks for extended periods of time while sipping drinks and eating. We cannot afford to let down our guard.”

“My administration is watching this situation very carefully,” Mayor Victorino said. “And, if double-digit cases continue and stem from bar interactions, my administration may need to ask Governor David Ige for permission to close all bars in Maui County for a period of time. We need to do whatever it takes to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in our community, and I ask everyone to wear face masks, maintain physical distancing of at least 6 feet, avoid crowds and wash hands frequently. Until a vaccine is readily available, these safety protocols are our best protection from COVID-19.”

“We will continue to work with our partners in law enforcement and the state Department of Health to monitor daily positive case counts closely. We look for sources of transmission and will take whatever action is needed to protect the health and safety of our residents.”

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