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## Waikiki Sand Project Nearly Complete

Brooks Baehr - bbaehr@kgmb9.com

More than two years of waiting, one month of pumping and more than 9,000 cubic yards of sand later, the beach replenishment project in Waikiki is almost finished. The last mound of new sand should be spread over the Kuhio Beach portion of Waikiki beach Friday night.

Saturday morning all the heavy machinery is scheduled to be moved and the entire beach will be re-opened. The state, which paid almost half a million dollars for the project, is calling the work a huge success. The beach is noticeably bigger, and according to the state, the work was done without hurting the environment and it was done with new technology that costs less than the old method.

"The change is the beach has got a little longer. (There's) more beach now," said Palolo resident Eric Lam, who frequents Waikiki Beach.

Before and after pictures posted on the state Department of Land and Natural Resources Web site illustrate just how much the beach has changed.

"There are places on this beach that 30 to 40 feet has been added to the beach area. Where portions of this beach used to have water up to the sea wall, now there's 30 to 40 feet of beach between the wall and water," said DLNR chairman Peter Young.

"It's a very dramatic difference. There's at least twice as much sand in areas where there was sand, and as you can see in areas where there was absolutely no sand we have sand again," added Rick Egged of the Waikiki Improvement Association.

The work began December 4, 2006. A barge pumped sand from the ocean floor off Waikiki through a pipeline back to the beach. Once there, it was distributed in areas with the worst erosion. The job cost the state \$475,000 - a fraction, according to the state, of what it would have cost to ship sand in from another island or from outside the state.

Coastal engineers told KGMB9 surf breaks were not affected by the offshore pumping and the environment was not damaged.

"So it's been largely successful on the economics, the environmental concerns have been well addressed, and we're going to continue to monitor that for the next year," said geologist Dolan Eversole.

Nobody can say for sure how long the sand will last, but the experts expect they may have to come back in three to five years to replenish the same stretch of beach. The prospect of a possible return doesn't seem to bother sunbathers. They are just happy to have a better beach.

"(It's) better because you can hold more people. You don't have to really be bunch up together. You can spread out a little bit more," Lam said.

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