



## MESSAGE FROM CIO CHRISTINE SAKUDA



*ETS Executive Team members (from left to right), IT Governance Officer Todd Omura, CIO Christine Sakuda and CISO Vince Hoang leading the inaugural Public Sector Cybersecurity summit.*

### Aloha ETS!

As the holiday season engulfs us, I'm reminded of all our hard work and efforts that made this year so great. We've had some wonderful moments to close out 2025 and I'm excited to

share some updates with you.

## **Hawai'i Hosts Successful Inaugural Public Sector Cybersecurity Summit**

On December 3<sup>rd</sup>, the inaugural Hawai'i Public Sector Cybersecurity Summit brought together more than 150 state and county leaders, educators and industry partners for a full day focused on strengthening cybersecurity across the islands. With technology touching every corner of public service, the summit emphasized the urgent need to safeguard sensitive information, enhance defenses and stay ahead of evolving threats, including the rapid rise of AI-driven attacks.

I was honored to deliver the welcome address where I highlighted Hawai'i's unique location in the middle of the Pacific. We hold a strategic position that brings both opportunity and vulnerability. Cybersecurity is about protecting people and the vital services they depend on every day. This Summit is a powerful moment for collaboration and innovation as we work toward a more secure Hawai'i.

Chief Information Security Officer Vince Hoang also offered opening remarks, underscoring the challenges ahead. "Attackers are adapting faster than ever, using automation and AI to exploit vulnerabilities. Our location makes us a focal point for nation-state activity, and we must strengthen our defenses through collaboration, innovation and shared expertise."

The event featured panels on adversary tactics, nation-state threats, foundational cyber hygiene, statewide investments and resources from partners such as CISA and MS-ISAC. Demonstrations by ethical hacker Mishall Khan highlighted how attacks unfold and how defenders can respond.

"Digital threats increasingly impact critical infrastructure, smart buildings, venues and public services," adds Keith Regan, state comptroller and director of the Department of Accounting and General Services, which oversees ETS. "This is one of the most urgent issues facing the IT community today."

The Summit marked a major milestone for Hawai'i's cybersecurity community, reinforcing the state's commitment to leading in cybersecurity innovation and resilience for all who depend on public services. We look forward to the next annual Cybersecurity Summit in 2026!

**Mahalo!**

*Chief Information Officer and administrator of the Office of Enterprise Technology Services  
Christine M. Sakuda*

## Winners Announced for the 10th Annual Hawai'i Code Challenge



*High school and college students along with IT professionals compete in the 2025 Hawai'i Annual Code Challenge*

Nine teams of Hawai'i's emerging technologists were recognized as winners of the 10th Annual Hawai'i Annual Code Challenge (HACC), held on November 22 at the University of Hawai'i (UH) – West O'ahu. ETS and UH have organized this annual event for a decade now, inspiring students, amateurs and professionals to help modernize state services and strengthen Hawai'i's local tech community.

This year, nine teams were crowned finalists after presenting their solutions to address four real-world challenges from state agencies and community partners to a panel of judges. The challenges were::

- DHRD – AI Agent Screening of Potential Applicants
- ETS – Standardized IT Project Review Web Application
- UH – HR Navigator
- UH – UH Pathfinder AI

Nearly 120 attendees—including families, educators and community supporters—watched as teams showcased applications ranging from AI-driven hiring tools to platforms that help students identify educational pathways for future careers. A total of \$18,000 in prizes were awarded across three divisions (high school, college and professional).

Lieutenant Governor Sylvia Luke, who delivered remarks before the presentations, praised the students for applying their skills to real-world issues that impact Hawai'i every day.

“Over the past ten years, the HACC has shown how creativity and technology can directly improve the lives of Hawai'i's people,” said Lieutenant Governor Luke. “Seeing these students and young professionals tackle real government challenges gives me tremendous hope for

the future. Their ideas, energy and dedication will help build a stronger, more innovative Hawai'i."

State Chief Information Officer (CIO) Christine Sakuda highlighted the importance of cultivating talent and fostering collaboration between the state and the community. "The HACC has been one of Hawai'i's most powerful platforms for growing our innovation ecosystem," said CIO Sakuda. "These teams have brought fresh perspectives and bold ideas that could transform how government serves the public. Their work not only helps us improve our systems, but also strengthens the next generation of technology leaders across our islands."

Celebrating its tenth year, the HACC continues to support the state of Hawai'i's goals of expanding the local IT workforce, strengthening community engagement and promoting civic-minded innovation.



*Lieutenant Governor Sylvia Luke with CIO Christine Sakuda (center) with the judges at the 10th annual HACC*

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## **State of Hawai'i Named Overall Winner in the 2025 Government Experience Awards**



*Comptroller Keith A. Regan (far right) and ETS team members with the 2025 Government Experience Award*

The state of Hawai'i has been honored by the Center for Digital Government (CDG) as an overall winner in the 2025 Government Experience Awards. CDG is a national research and advisory institute focused on technology policy and best practices in state and local government.

This year, the winning jurisdictions in the CDG Government Experience Awards focused on making government more accessible through technology — and that work is not limited to websites and apps. Notably, all the winning jurisdictions are employing artificial intelligence with caution and inquisition, ensuring they are adopting it for the right reason: to help people.

The program highlights states, cities, counties and agencies that are setting the standard for people-first services, using technology creatively to build trust with residents. Winners were celebrated at the GovX Summit on September 25, a virtual event highlighting innovation in public service.

**The 2025 Holiday Season at ETS is a \*WRAP\***



The ETS team came together in festive spirit for an ETS holiday gathering, an occasion filled with laughter, friendly competition and well-earned celebration. This highly anticipated event brought colleagues from across ETS together to reflect on the year's accomplishments and enjoy time connecting outside of daily work.

A special moment of the program included remarks from our fearless leader, CIO Christine Sakuda, who shared words of appreciation and reflection with the ETS team.

Heartfelt appreciation goes out to all who helped make the holiday gathering memorable.

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### **A special mahalo to the Holiday Planning Committee**

Amy Yamashita, Cara Binger, Spencer Bento, Nathan Akamu, Nick Huff, Matthew Nagatori, Brian Parry and Matthew Smigielski — along with Jayke Manzano, Brent Noborikawa, Joanna Lee and Courtney Yamamoto, for their time, creativity and dedication. Thanks to their efforts, this was a true celebration of teamwork, community and holiday cheer.

## **ETS IS HIRING!**

ETS has several job openings to fill. If you know someone that may be interested in being part of our dynamic, innovative team that works on the latest cutting-edge technology in the industry, please visit [jobs](#), for more information.



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