



INQUIRY RECOMMENDATIONS WILL BE IMPLEMENTED

The country's Prime Minister has promised that recommendations coming out of the recently concluded Commission of Inquiry report will be put into effect.

The Prime Minister issued this assurance was issued he tabled the contents of the report compiled recently by a Commission of Enquiry.

He referred to the Rochamel matter and the management of the National Conservation Authority (NCA) along with the Road Development Programmes one and two.

"The management of the National Conservation Authority (NCA) disclosed gross irregularities in the conduct of the affairs of that authority and that offences appear to have been committed with the expenditure of public funds entrusted to that Authority.

"In addition the contract for \$43,750,000.00 which was signed to meet the cost of the road development projects 001 and 002 eventually cost the government more than 100 percent above the contract price resulting in significant loss to the government and people of Saint Lucia" the prime minister said.



Prime Minister
Hon. Stephenson King

The Commissioners who conducted the inquiry were Sir Fenton Ramsahoye Mustapha Ibrahim and John Reginald Phelps Dumas.

The Inquiry was conducted from February through April, 2009.

"JARRIES" AND CAMS TO BOOST SECURITY AT BORDELAIS



Security at the island's primary prison – Bordelais Correctional Facility – will be pumped up with the addition of surveillance cameras throughout the compound and the introduction of jelly shoes or what is known as "jarries" to the inmates' uniform.

That's the word from Minister responsible for Home Affairs and National Security Senator Guy Mayers who says that security at the maximum security facility is too lax.

Complaining about the number of contraband smuggled into the prison, the Minister says the number one concern is the illegal possession of mobile telephones by inmates. This he added is a "recurring problem" and alludes to an even bigger problem of the collaboration of the prison staff in helping to smuggle the devices into the jail.

Another niggling problem at the compound is the prisoners' footwear. Senator Mayers says shoes – boots, expensive sneakers have often been the cause of problems such as fights, robbery and a means to smuggle items including cell phones into the facility.

To cut the problem out at the source, he said normal shoes would be outlawed at the prison and jarries introduced. "So this will become the normal issue for the inmates. This will be part of their uniforms while they are incarcerated at the Bordelais Correc-

tional Facility. There is hardly anything if anything at all that can be smuggled in with jarries. When they have served their time and leave the facility their shoes will be given back to them."

He added that surveillance cameras are currently being installed at the jail and will record the comings and goings of inmates, staff and visitors. A metal detector will also be installed at the facility to monitor anyone going into the prison. This he said would also help boost security at Bordelais.

One of the main concerns expressed by the National Security Minister was that inmates at Bordelais were not being rehabilitated and as he said, they just "sit in their cells". The Minister said that work is now ongoing on a farm at the prison, on which inmates would work.

"We are now fencing the farm and when this is done, the inmates will be able to go out there and work the farm. It is a form of exercise and intellectual stimulation and therefore an effective form of rehabilitation. Rehabilitation at Bordelais needs to be kicked into high gear." Senator Mayers said.

The new security measures at Bordelais are expected to go into effect in the new year



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Herman Heads Bordelais Again

Following a confirmation date from the Public Service Commission, former prison boss Hilary Herman will take up duties as Director of the island's sole maximum security prison - Bordelais Correctional Facility - once again

Home Affairs and National Security Minister Senator Guy Mayers said after meeting with prison officers and the manage-

ment of the prison recently the staff had expressed their commitment to work with Herman in the interest of the prison.

"In fact they indicated that the Prison Officers Association had met a few days before our meeting and there was consensus that all officers will work with Mr. Herman. I think that signals a new and good beginning at the prison, and I want to

publicly thank the officers who are dedicated to maintaining law and order at the facility."

The Minister also expressed optimism about an ongoing project to further develop five acres of land which are currently being used as the prison farm.

He said the development of the farm will assist with the rehabilitation of the inmates and

reduce the recidivism rate at the prison. "It is better to have the prisoners working on the farm than to have them locked up in a cell for the entire day. My vision is that as part of the rehabilitation programme inmates will work on the farm, develop a skill and be productive enough to make the facility self-sufficient," Senator Mayers said.



Hilary Herman

FCCA Conference Successfully Held In Saint Lucia

The week-long much anticipated 16th annual conference and trade show of the Florida Cruise Caribbean Association (FCCA) came to a close in Saint Lucia last night.

The premier networking and marketing platform for regional cruise business, the event was attended by hundreds of key industry professionals and it is expected that much will come out of it particularly for the cruise business on the island.

Earlier, Minister for Tourism Senator Allen Chastanet had said that having such important people in the cruise industry all together in Saint Lucia would be of immeasurable value to the island.

He said it would provide these industry experts the opportunity to witness and experience first-hand the natural beauty of the island complemented by the hospitality and generosity of its people.

Projections are that this winter season the island will welcome a record-breaking 680,000 cruise passengers



Governor General Dame Pearlette Louisy accepts a bouquet from an FCCA official

CALLING UNIVERSITY STUDENTS - ST.LUCIA COLLEGE FAIR 2009

St. Lucian students will be given a better opportunity to decide which university they would like to study at following the annual St. Lucia International College Fair later next week.

The fair being staged by the Ministry of the Public Service and Human Resource Development will be held on the 2nd floor of the Blue Coral Mall, Bridge Street, Castries for two days only, November 4 - 5, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and 2:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. both days.

Several tertiary level institutions from Canada, the United Kingdom, the United States and the Caribbean will be participating in this year's fair.

One of the main objectives

of the annual event is to help students and their parents have a better understanding of available schools and what they have to offer so they can make better, more informed decisions.

The College Fair also seeks to provide interested St. Lucians with an opportunity to discover the diversity of higher education and to provide regional and international institutions the opportunity to diversify their student population by recruiting students from St. Lucia.

For further information contact: the Training Division of the Ministry of the Public Service & Human Resource Development, 1st Floor, Sir Stanislaus James Building, The Waterfront, Castries or at Telephone Numbers (758) 468-4189/4638.

In the last two years Saint Lucia has recorded significant increases in cruise passenger arrivals with the island exceeding 600,000 passengers for the first time in history, last year.

Projections are that this winter season the island will welcome

a record-breaking 680,000 cruise passengers. And industry officials say that the island's hosting of the recent FCCA acts as a catalyst to cruise tourism playing a more prominent role in tourism and to the overall economic development of the island.

Close to 400 cruise liners are expected to dock in Saint Lucia this winter season and it is anticipated that the hosting of the FCCA conference will result in an even greater capacity and more frequent cruise calls to the island particularly during the off-season.

SAINT LUCIANS FLY JETBLUE

On October 15, award-winning JetBlue Airways began serving Saint Lucia, boosting the island's airlift from one of its main tourism markets.

JetBlue began serving Hewanorra International Airport with three weekly flights out of New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport on Sundays, Mondays and Thursdays.

Saint Lucia is one of 50 international destinations throughout north, south and central America benefiting from Jet Blue's Service and according to Tourism Minister Allen Chastanet, Saint Lucia is very excited to join the new JetBlue service from the largest market in the United States.

He said JetBlue is rapidly becoming a major player in the US airline industry and has great plans for the Caribbean. "We are happy to be one of the first destinations in the Eastern Caribbean to be served by JetBlue" he said.

Jamaica and Barbados are the two other islands that will welcome this new service later this year.

Meanwhile, Director of the Saint Lucia Tourist Board Louis Lewis has also welcomed the new flight coming out of what he called "... an important source market which will provide the capacity to complement our marketing efforts."

The US tri-state area accounts for more than 50% of Saint Lucia's US arrivals.

The airline operates its Saint Lucia service with spacious 150-

JetBlue is rapidly becoming a major player in the US airline industry and has great plans for the Caribbean



seat Airbus A320 aircraft, offering travelers all of the amenities for which JetBlue has become popular, including complimentary seatback television programming, comfortable leather seats, the most legroom in coach of any US airline, unlimited free snacks and what the airline claims is industry-leading customer service.

To further celebrate the inau-

gural service, JetBlue is also offering special US\$129 fares between New York City and St. Lucia. This means that St. Lucians living in New York can take advantage of this deal to fly home from now until February 8, 2010.

Blackout dates and other restrictions apply. Log onto: <http://www.jetblue.com> for further information.



Even While H1N1 Dies Down, Saint Lucians Told Beware Second Wave

Saint Lucians are being warned to keep alert and beware the second wave of the deadly H1N1 Influenza virus that is wreaking havoc around the world.

According to health reports, the current rate of infection in St. Lucia seems to be slowing down, indicating that the island is nearing the end of a first wave of the disease with the number of cases recorded at health care facilities reducing significantly "from 3 digits, to 2 digit numbers per week."

As a result, the health authorities say that as of Mon-

day November 2, 2009, the Ministry of Health and Wellness will suspend the operations of specialized Flu clinics around the island.

"However, everyone needs to remain on alert as there is expected to be a second wave of H1N1 Influenza infection. This means that after an apparent lull in cases, we are expecting to see a second sharp increase or spike in the number of persons coming down with flu like symptoms, within the next 2-6 months," said the NEMO Secretariat.

NEMO adds that it is most likely that as the first wave of H1N1

Influenza illness affected mostly the young as in school children, it is expected that the second spike will most likely target young adults and adults or the 'working age' population.

In light of this, health authorities have cranked up their efforts in past weeks to better prepare the business sector to deal with the expected fall-out.

"The Ministry of Health is well placed to assist business places with infection control procedures in the workplace. The Ministry of Agriculture is the authority on bio-security measures to be taken on farms to prevent the spread of H1N1 infection in this

setting. Employers and the self-employed, are urged to contact either of these agencies for assistance in securing the health and viability of their operations," NEMO said.

To date, St. Lucia has not recorded any deaths from H1N1 Influenza and while some people have been admitted to hospital with complications they have all recovered completely.

The public is again being reminded that although most people who acquire the disease have only mild flu-like symptoms and recover within one week, some patients may develop more severe illness and a few may die.

A vaccine against H1N1 Influenza is currently available in limited quantities in industrialized countries and may soon become available here. However, it should be noted that when this vaccine does become available in St. Lucia, priority will be given to 'very high risk groups' such as clinical health care workers, workers in the emergency services and other high risk groups.

For further information call the Ministry of Health at 468-5300/09/18/17/02, 452-2301 or the Ministry of Agriculture at 468-5621/20/24, 450-3213, 454-6254.

Motorists Pay Less



Motorists in St. Lucia this week began paying a little less to fill up their gas tanks.

As of October 26, gas is being sold on the island at \$11.60 per gallon down from \$11.87 a gallon a difference of 27 cents, while the price of diesel has also gone down to \$11.37 a gallon, down from \$11.44 a gallon.

There has been no change in the price of LPG products (cooking gas) and kerosene and the price of these remain the same as last month.

Motorists can expect the price

of petroleum and petroleum products in Saint Lucia to be changed on a monthly basis in keeping with the pass through mechanism that was introduced in September.

The price of these goods is now set by market forces and not by the government as had obtained.

The next scheduled price change is November 23rd at which time in keeping with the national move from imperial to metric – the prices of gasoline and diesel will be stated in liters. That new change will take effect on November 2nd.

Top Island Award

Condé Nast Traveler, a US-based magazine with a readership of more than 820,000, announced that Saint Lucia had been ranked number six in the category of “Top Islands” in this year’s annual Readers’ Choice Awards poll conducted by that Magazine.

Up one spot from last year in the “Caribbean and Atlantic Island” category, Saint Lucia’s many new developments, services, activities and amenities made a strong impact on visitors.

Director of Tourism Louis Lewis sees this as an important endorsement for the island. “This award from such a reputable and respected agency reinforces the fact that Saint Lucia is highly regarded as a leading destination with a top class tourism product. The Saint Lucia Tourist Board prides itself on being able to set Saint Lucia apart from other Caribbean destinations by position-

ing the island as having more to offer than rest and relaxation.”

Thousands of readers participated in Condé Nast Traveler’s on-line questionnaire, voting on categories of activities, atmosphere/ambience, beaches, friendliness, lodging, restaurants and scenery.

The Saint Lucia Tourist Board also acknowledged three on-island resorts - Ladera, Anse Chastanet and the Body Holiday by Le Sport – which also received rankings from the Readers’ Choice Awards.

Ladera was ranked number 5 out of the “Top 10 Caribbean Resorts”. This is the second year in a row that the resort has held onto the fifth spot and prides itself on its award-winning cuisine, luxurious spa services and unique design that offers unobstructed views of the legendary Pitons. Anse Chastanet followed in sixth spot and The Body Holiday by Le Sport ranked 17th in this Category.



Gros Islet - a tourist hot spot

Since 1988, the annual Condé Nast Traveler ‘Readers’ Choice Awards’ poll has analyzed the travel preferences of the maga-

zine’s readership in various categories, including cities, islands, airlines, cruise lines, hotels, spas, resorts and car rental agencies.

Complete award results are listed in the November issue of Condé Nast Traveler and at www.cn-traveler.com

Saint Lucia And OECS In Need Of Trained Diplomats

Saint Lucia and other members of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) are in need of trained diplomats and the best way to achieve this is to establish a school of diplomacy. So says OECS Director General Dr. Len Ishmael.

Dr. Ishmael says the need for a school of diplomacy to serve the region was pressing particularly as the sub-region continues to build links with other regions.

Speaking at the recent open-

ing of a framework workshop to develop the OECS School of Diplomacy she said in order to command respect in spite of its size, the OECS must recognize the need for career diplomats, trained in the language and art of diplomacy.

Acting Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Judith St. Hill, speaking on behalf of Foreign Affairs Minister Rufus Bousquet said the Diplomatic Academy of Spain provides an exemplary model for the OECS. She encouraged participants to

draw from the experiences of that school to guide the developmental stage of the proposed institution.

The Diplomatic Academy of Spain is providing financial and technical support for the initiative.

St. Hill added that the deepening collaboration between the OECS and Spain is well appreciated. She said the Foreign Affairs Minister views the School’s programme as the key to shaping the political and economic future of the region.

WE STAND CORRECTED!!!

In our last issue (October 17, 2009), we erroneously referred to renowned St. Lucian artist Dunstan St. Omer as “Sir” Dunstan St. Omer.

While the esteemed St. Omer has been awarded St. Lucia’s highest honour – the St. Lucia Cross, this award does not come with the title Sir. Rather, he is the Honourable Dunstan St. Omer.

It was our mistake and we sincerely apologize and hope he was not unduly inconvenienced.

The National Review would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Honourable Dunstan on his recent award.



Bursting bamboo - an ole time boys pastime

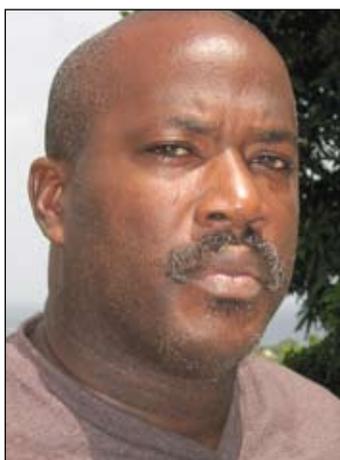


Cutting Wood



Decked in cultural fashion they all came out; the old...

Kwéyòl-La Vivan, Annou Wiboté!



Dr. Kentry D Jn Pierr

For the last 25 years, Saint Lucians have gotten together every year to celebrate their culture, history and traditions in food, song, music and dance and in cultural displays of practices of yesteryear.

Since 1984 under the guidance of the Folk Research Centre, nationals come together on one special day "Jounen Kweyol" on the last Sunday of the month of October which

itself is celebrated annually as "Creole Heritage Month".

This year was no different and last Sunday families around the island got together and traveled the width and breadth of the island to have a good time, cultural style.

Over the past two and a half decades, Jounen Kweyol has evolved and developed into a family affair where families get together and with friends, either host cultural lunches at their own homes with lots of Creole food and drink or travel together to the various communities for the festivities.

Every year FRC designates and endorses specific communities where the focus of the annual celebrations takes place. This year the spotlight was on the communities of Vieux Fort, Boguis and Soufriere.

And, after the many preparations in getting the food and entertainment together and after one hectic day of celebrations, FRC has deemed it a success! Jounen Kwéyòl 2009 was a hit!

Speaking with The National Review, FRC Executive Director Kentry Jn. Pierre admitted that in spite of the many challenges and difficulties to put such a big event together, it all went well.

"We are confident that St Lucians were sensitized about Kwéyòl - the language and the culture." He added that the designated communities were well showcased: "Communities were able to share their own traditions steeped in our deep cultural heritage with all visitors to their areas."

Jn. Pierre said the Folk Research Centre continues its commitment towards making St Lucians more aware of the value of the Kwéyòl language and culture and its role in national development.

Meanwhile, our roving Photographer was able to capture the essence of the Jounen Kweyol activities as she traveled around the island.

(Photos by Isabelle)



...and the young



Local music is made when people come together to have fun



Its as much as about the food

Eye on the Constituencies

With a major focus on education and culture, St. Lucia's Prime Minister Stephenson King lends his unwavering support and commitment to his constituency Castries North.

This area comprises a population of approximately 15,000 nationals with the largest number of pre-school, infant, primary and secondary schools in any one constituency on the island.

Prime Minister King who has always steadfastly made clear his views on giving young people a chance and educating them to allow them the opportunity to face the challenges of an ever evolving world, has certainly stood behind his commitment to provide the best learning environment for St. Lucia's youth.

In this issue we look at some of the schools in the Castries North constituency where PM King has lent financial support to see that facilities are renovated and brought up to standard.



Hon. Stephenson King
MP for Castries North



Students of the Camille Henry Primary School remain safer due to the recently renovated walkway



To face a more modern world, the Castries Comprehensive Secondary School phased out "Typing" and now educates students in the new and improved subject: Electronic Document Preparation Management (EDMP) thanks to this up-to-date lab



Principal of the Castries Comprehensive Secondary School Jeremy Joseph accepting a cheque for the renovation of the EDMP Lab from Taiwanese Ambassador Tom Chou



With a view to the comprehensive development of young people in St. Lucia, the Prime Minister also focuses his attention on sports. Here, a participant of the Stephenson King Football Tournament organized by the La Cery Football League accepts a prize from the PM



With a set-up that would make any food network television channel proud, this home Economics Lab at the Vide Bouteille Secondary School, prepares the island's future top chefs, in culinary arts



The recently renovated Vide Bouteille Secondary School makes for a better learning environment for its students



Prime Minister Stephenson King mixes and mingles with students of the St. Joseph's Convent (SJC) Secondary School, alma mater to some of the most accomplished St. Lucian women



Paving the way for St. Lucian students to become more compliant with the quickly paced technologically advanced world, the IT Lab at the Seventh Day Academy Secondary School was recently upgraded



Prime Minister Stephenson King says the new IT lab at St. Mary's College will maintain the standard of excellence for which the school is known



Bright and sparkling, the newly re-furbished Christylights Dance Academy nurtures the artistic and creative inclinations of the youth



A young SJC student hands over a token of appreciation to Prime Minister Stephenson King on the occasion of the cheque presentation for the renovation of the IT Lab that is ongoing

In A Nutshell

Hospitality Academy For Saint Lucia?

The possibility of the island establishing a hospitality and marine academy is currently one of the main topics of discussion by Tourism Minister Senator Allen Chastanet.

Citing the lack of trained nationals in the cruise industry accounting for the very low percentage of Caribbean nationals employed in the cruise sector, Senator Chastanet believes that the establishment of such an institution in Saint Lucia would be more than opportune.

With the introduction of thirty-four new cruise lines that will ply the Caribbean waters within the next three to four years, Senator Chastanet says it is important that people be adequately trained and acquire the right skills for the cruise industry.

"We are proposing the establishment of an academy that will take kids out of high school, put them through an 8-9 month certification programme which will be both academic and practical.

PM Calls For Kweyol In Schools

Prime Minister Stephenson King says the need for the island to further develop and increase its linguistic capacity, both in regard to the local dialect Kweyol and French and Spanish, seen around the world as the languages of business and economics.

One of the moves which the island's leader believes can be capitalized upon is Saint Lucia's historical link with the French culture, language, history and traditions.

Speaking upon the occasion of the observance of Creole Heritage month that is celebrated here every October and culminates with the ever-growing festivities of "Jounen Kweyol" the Prime Minister said Saint Lucia should try to make the most of its historical links, particularly to the French.

"When we look back and we

Thereafter, we would assist those kids to get recruited by the cruise lines. Once those kids go on the cruise ships for 3 to 4 years, that, in and of itself will be like attending a university" he said.

He added that the benefit to St. Lucia of such an institution and the subsequent work experience garnered by the trained young people on cruise liners would be tremendous. "...when they are coming back home we have an even better skilled work force; with the new hotels coming in, it is going to be a huge advantage. We are approaching individual companies and also the cruise industry as a group with the possibility of participating in this investment."

Saint Lucia is now in the process of signing a Memorandum of Understanding with Monroe College St. Lucia and an international recruiting agency with a view to producing properly trained individuals within the cruise sector, the minister said.

examine history, the fact that Saint Lucia changed hands seven times to the British and seven times to the French shows there's a need for us to continue to maintain that relevance of our French history and our British history. For us being able to speak Kweyol is an advantage; being able to speak French is a requirement. I do hope the Kweyol Heritage Month will not only allow us to reflect on our history, but enable us to cherish the very unique history that we share with the French territories.

The prime minister also noted that literacy and fluency of citizens in the Kweyol language must be strengthened.

He suggested that the education system should provide a place for the teaching of Kweyol in schools.

A Master Plan For St. Jude



Saint Jude Hospital gutted by fire on September 9, 2009

Prime Minister Stephenson King and officials of the Ministry of Health and Saint Jude Hospital met last week with Taiwanese building company Holdyear Enterprise Company Limited, to review a proposed master plan for the new St. Jude Hospital.

Prime Minister King described the meeting as an historic moment in Saint Lucia's health sector.

"We welcome the opportunity and we welcome the offer to develop a master plan for us with the hope that we will consider it to be one that is in keeping with our own vision," the prime minister said.

Taiwanese Ambassador to St. Lucia Tom Chou, says since the fire, his embassy has been

The master plan encompasses several factors including cost and sustainability

moving swiftly with its plans to assist with the rebuilding of Saint Jude.

He says work on the proposed design started almost immediately after the September, 9, fire.

The master plan, according to Ambassador Chou encompasses several factors including cost and sustainability.

Meanwhile, The Embassy of Taiwan has donated over EC\$5,000.00 towards the Saint Jude rehabilitation project.

The money was collected through a fund raising raffle undertaken by the Taiwanese Embassy and south based holiday resort Coconut Bay, during the recent Taiwan/Saint Lucia Partnership Trade exhibition.

The cheque was presented by Taiwanese Ambassador Tom Chou to the Saint Jude Hospital Board.

Accepting the cheque, Chairman of the Saint Jude Hospital Board Percival Mc. Donald, said his team was very appreciative of the gesture.

Courtesy Taxis Exclusive Drivers For Pointe Seraphine

Courtesy Taxi Co-operative Society earlier this month signed a partnership agreement with the National Development Corporation (NDC)

One local taxi company is happy to benefit from a recently signed agreement with the National Development Corporation (NDC), caretakers of the Pointe Seraphine Duty Free Shopping Complex.

Courtesy Taxi Co-operative Society earlier this month signed a partnership agreement, with the National Development Corporation (NDC) giving them exclusive rights to operate out of the duty free shopping centre at Pointe Seraphine.

NDC officials say the agreement allows the taxi association that numbers over 200 in members, the opportunity to make substantial income particularly in this winter season that will see many cruise ships docking at Pointe Seraphine.

Under this two year agreement, the members of the Courtesy Co-operative Society will be the only drivers and vehicles allowed in the duty free zone to pick up passengers coming off the ships to take them to their destinations on the island and on various tours.

ADDRESS BY

HON. CHARLOTTE TESSA MANGAL**MINISTER FOR COMMERCE, INDUSTRY AND
CONSUMER AFFAIRS**

AT THE

**LAUNCH OF STANDARDS AND
QUALITY FOCAL POINTS IN THE
PUBLIC SERVICE****SAINT LUCIA BUREAU OF STANDARDS,
OCTOBER 06, 2009,**

As Minister with responsibility for Standards, I welcome this initiative undertaken by the Saint Lucia Bureau of Standards in placing the importance of standards in the forefront of the operations of Government and in particular the operation of the Public Service.

For too long the impression has been given that the Public Service is an institution where issues such as customer service; performing within parameters such as deadlines and budget; and getting a matter addressed right the first time are solely within the ambit of the private sector. The Public Service is generally portrayed as the institution plagued with mediocrity where people get paid handsome salaries for doing very little and have a guaranteed job for life. It is the place where the brightest minds are employed but what is produced is often very mundane and lacks depth.

That's the unflattering picture of the largest single employer in the country. It is a picture which is of course largely untrue but if we are honest, we will discover that there is a great deal to be desired in the quality of service delivered by some members of the public service. It is the experience that the public takes away from those unfortunate encounters that does the untold damage to the credibility and professionalism of officers employed in the public service. For example, why should a telephone ring more than three times in an office without someone answering? And if per chance the call is answered on the fourth or fifth

The establishment of standards and quality focal points in the public service is one initiative that seeks to address the need for standards

ring, why should the public officer answering that call simply say to the caller "you've reached the wrong Ministry" and hang up without providing guidance to the caller on the correct Ministry to call.

In small economies such as Saint Lucia, the importance of an efficient and effective public service can make all the difference between lifting people from the status of the unemployed to the position of independence and gaining a sense of self-worth. By simply providing the correct information in a timely manner to a potential investor, a public officer can facilitate a multimillion dollar investment that could make the difference between someone becoming a thief and therefore a criminal and that person becoming a taxpaying member of society.

The public service as we know it is the arm of Government that provides advice to the policy makers and executes policy decisions. Its efficiency and performance, in large measure, reflects the work culture and attitude to work of the wider society. The standards set in the public

service very often serves as the benchmark for the rest of the economy.

It is therefore extremely important that we, as a developing country, establish standards throughout the public service that engender competitiveness. Competitiveness in the public service will invariably translate to competitiveness within the rest of the economy. The need to cultivate an attitude of competitiveness has never before assumed such great importance. I am sure you are fully aware that Saint Lucia is a full member of the CSME and on the 15th of this month marks one year since we signed onto the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with the European Union. These are all bilateral agreements that are meant to engender greater efficiency and competitiveness within the private sector. The assumption is that competition will drive the need for greater competitiveness among firms and individuals. But how will these economic agents respond when their very actions can be frustrated by a public service which is not driven by the need for itself to be competitive?



In essence I am saying that the success of the private sector and by extension the employment opportunities that are created will be strongly influenced by the facilitation that the private sector receives from the Government. In that regard therefore, the need for Government-wide standards is self evident.

The establishment of standards and quality focal points in the public service is one initiative that seeks to address the need for standards. It has as its overall goal, "the promotion and support for a quality culture in the public service through the application and implementation of standards."

This initiative supports and encourages advocacy among key stakeholders. It will, in the pilot phase establish seven Standards and Quality Focal Points throughout the public service and conduct over the next four months training sessions and seminars for the targeted participants. These sessions will focus on:

- Introduction of the infrastructural framework for Quality Management Systems;
- Management for Success based on the ISO 9001-2008 Quality Management System Requirement;
- And facilitate the development of an action plan.

I am pleased that the Saint

Lucia Bureau of Standards has enlisted more people to be at the front lines of the effort to engender a quality culture in the public service. The idea of ensuring that this initiative targets senior officers recognizes your influence on policy makers and your own input in the policy process. It is imperative that you track what is happening in your respective Ministries to advise on the application of standards where necessary. But critical to the success of this initiative will be your individual commitment to include the other members of your Ministry and infuse a sense of mission into the project.

I have been informed by the Bureau that the initiative includes the facilitation of action plans for Ministries which will allow you to operationalize this programme in your various Ministries. Given what I have stated earlier, I trust that you will make yourself available to ensure the success of this initiative.

This is the kind of partnership which must be forged and encouraged in the effort to reposition the image of the public service and the national economy. Standards are a critical prerequisite to increasing efficiency, and productivity. Its success will result in increased job satisfaction for officers involved, the private sector and satisfaction for the customer as well. This is a win, win outcome that redounds to the benefit of the country. I thank you.

Medical

Report Card



Are There Medicines To Treat 2009 H1N1 Infection?

There are drugs your doctor may prescribe for treating both seasonal and 2009 H1N1 called "antiviral drugs." These drugs can make you better faster and may also prevent serious complications.

Antiviral drugs are being used mainly to treat people who are very sick, such as people who need to be hospitalized, and to treat sick people who are more likely to get serious flu complications. Your health care provider will decide whether antiviral drugs are needed to treat your illness. Remember, most people with 2009 H1N1 have had mild illness and have not needed medical care or antiviral drugs and the same is true of seasonal flu.

What Household Cleaning Should Be Done To Prevent The Spread Of Influenza Virus?

To prevent the spread of influenza virus it is important to keep surfaces (especially bedside tables, surfaces in the bathroom, kitchen counters and toys for children) clean by wiping them down with a household disinfectant according to directions on the product label.

People also wonder how should linens, eating utensils and dishes of persons infected with influenza virus be handled?

Linens, eating utensils, and dishes belonging to those who are sick do not need to be cleaned separately, but importantly these items should not be shared without washing thoroughly first.

Linens (such as bed sheets and towels) should be washed by using household laundry soap and tumbled dry on a hot setting. Individuals should avoid "hugging" laundry prior to washing it to prevent contaminating themselves. Individuals should wash their hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub immediately after handling dirty laundry. Eating utensils should be washed either in a dishwasher or by hand with water and soap.

What Are "Emergency Warning Signs" That Should Signal Anyone To Seek Medical Care Urgently?

In children:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough
- Fever with a rash

In adults:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting

Health Minister Says The Island Remains On Top Of H1N1

Saint Lucia's Health Minister Dr. Keith Mondesir says he is pleased with the way in which health authorities here are handling the threat and the treatment of known cases of the H1N1 virus.

To date with thousands of people already succumbing to the flu-like virus around the world, the island has not recorded a single death.

Minister Mondesir says this is largely due to government's efforts through their various agencies to ensure that Saint Lucians use preventative measures to keep the flu at bay and that they are well attended when they contract the dangerous virus.

He said health centres on the island are well equipped to handle cases and surveillance at the islands ports of entry have

stepped up to minimize incidences of infected people coming into the country and spreading the disease.

"In cases where we have had outbreaks in schools, PAHO has assisted us and we have gotten the situation under control. All we are asking Saint Lucians is to continue to observe precautionary measures like covering their mouths when they cough and sneeze, sneeze into your elbows and if you feel ill, seek medical advice from your own doctor or at the various health centres that are specially set up to deal with H1N1"

The health minister has also cautioned St. Lucians to stay home if they feel sick or feel themselves coming down with flu-like symptoms such as fever and also to keep their children at home and away from school if children are sick.

"Generally however, we are on top of the situation and we are trying at all costs to maintain the island's levels of drugs to treat the disease. We have to be careful because in countries as small as ours, there is the potential of this virus spreading quickly and the results could be devastating not only to the lives of our people but also to our economy, so we are trying to minimize incidences of infection and to effectively treat people who may become infected with H1N1."

Dr. Mondesir warned nationals to remain vigilant especially those who are more susceptible to contracting the disease such as the elderly, children, expectant mothers and people with pre-dispositions such as Diabetics.

Talking To Children About H1N1

Educate yourself first. Know the basic facts about H1N1—the symptoms, how it spreads, and how you can help protect yourself and your child from getting sick. Consider following some of these helpful tips:

- Share information about H1N1 in a calm, reassuring manner. Be careful not to worry children.
- Limit their exposure to me-

dia and adult conversations about H1N1.

- If your children are watching television, try to watch with them or make sure you are available to answer questions about H1N1.
- Use their questions as an opportunity to talk about what they can do to avoid getting H1N1 flu.
- Keep activities as consistent

and normal as possible even if your normal routine changes (due to daycare or school closures).

- Be a good example. Show children that you wash your hands frequently with soap and water. When you cough or sneeze, cover your mouth or use a tissue then throw the tissue away.

Good Advice To Prevent (Swine Flu) H1N1

Dr. Vinay Goyal a specialist with clinical experience of over 20 years has issued the following advice about guarding against contracting the H1N1 Flu virus:

The only flu portals of entry are the nostrils and mouth/throat. In a global epidemic of this nature, it's almost impossible to avoid coming into contact with H1N1, in spite of all precautions. Contact with H1N1 is not so much of a problem as proliferation is.

While you are still healthy and not showing any symptoms of H1N1 infection, in order to prevent proliferation, aggravation of symptoms, and development of secondary infections, some very simple steps, not fully highlighted in most official com-

munications, can be practiced, such as:

1. Frequent hand-washing
2. "Hands-off-the-face". Resist all temptations to touch any part of the face
3. Gargle twice a day with warm salt water (use Listerine if you don't trust salt). H1N1 takes 2-3 days after initial infection in the throat/ nasal cavity to proliferate and show characteristic symptoms. Simple gargling prevents proliferation. In a way, gargling with salt water has the same effect on a healthy individual that Tamiflu has on an infected one. Don't underestimate this simple, inexpensive, and powerful preventative method.
4. Clean your nostrils at least

once every day with warm salt water by simply using a large syringe that gently forces a stream of saline solution through the nostril.

5. Boost your natural immunity with foods that are rich in Vitamin C. If you have to supplement with Vitamin C tablets, make sure that it also has Zinc to boost absorption.
6. Drink as many warm liquids - tea, coffee, etc, as you can. Drinking warm liquids has the same effect as gargling, but in the reverse direction. They wash off proliferating viruses from the throat into the stomach where they cannot survive, proliferate, or do any harm.

Montoute Underscores Human Resource

Parliamentary Representative for Gros-Islet and Minister for Social Transformation Lenard Montoute has been underscoring human resource development as an integral part of national development.

Human resource development, he says is Saint Lucia's chief selling point in its increasingly service-based economy.

The Gros-Islet MP recently addressed constituents who participated in an entrepreneurship workshop designed to enhance

their skills in small business management.

"Of equal importance is Human Resource Development, because if we as a people are not sufficiently developed in terms of our abilities, then our community will never progress or make strides, despite the structures that are around us," Montoute said.

The minister says it is commonplace for development to be measured only on the basis of infrastructural development.

He emphasised, there must be

balance between infrastructural and human development.

"We must prepare our people not only to take care of the structures but to make proper use of the structures. These structures are there for your use and if you are not well equipped, prepared, and trained, then you will not be able to make the best use of them."

Minister Montoute referred to the well known adage of "teaching a man to fish rather than handing him one" as being the most valuable lesson in human resource development.



Hon. Lenard Montoute
Minister for Social Transformation



Work continues at the Vigie Playing Field to upgrade the facility to a top grade sporting venue complete with cricket pitch, football field and synthetic two-lane track. Under the EU funded project to upgrade playing fields in St. Lucia, four other facilities are also being refurbished namely in La Guerre, Pierrot, Grand Riviere, Dennery and Corinth. Work is expected to be complete by year end

Is VAT Regressive?

One of the most commonly asked questions about the impact of a Value Added Tax on society is whether it is a regressive tax.

A tax is called regressive when a larger part of the salary of households in the lower income bracket is paid in taxes, as compared to the same ratio for households in the higher income bracket.

To tackle this regressive nature of VAT, the Project has paid close attention to the treatment of basic goods and services under the VAT system, to ensure that vulnerable and low income groups are not adversely affected.

This is achieved through zero-rating and exempting certain goods and services.

The zero-rated or exempt treatment of goods and services under the VAT system will

be applied across the board. This means that any item which is zero rated will attract no VAT, no matter who buys that item.

Deciding which items to zero rate and exempt requires detailed analysis, careful planning and execution. For this reason enough time and consultation must be given for the determination of such items, so as to ensure the desired impact is felt mainly by those vulnerable or low income groups.

Additionally, the Project is working in conjunction with the Office of the Prime Minister and Ministries of Education, Health and Social Transformation, with the aim of strengthening current and developing new social policies to cushion any adverse effects of VAT. Such policies include the school feeding program and "koudemain ste lucie".

Am I Vat Ready?

With the advent of the VAT, there will be several changes that will affect the operations of every business in Saint Lucia. And this would be totally dependent on whether the business has met or surpassed the established VAT threshold and would be required to register and so charge value added tax - VAT - on taxable supplies.

In the interim however, all businesses should begin to assess the impact of VAT on their business, to prepare for these changes, while minimizing disruption to their operations.

The VAT Implementation Project intends to undertake extensive training and consultation in this regard. However, until the approval of VAT policies, and as part of the pre-implementation exercise, all businesses will need to:

1. Determine whether their present accounting and cash registers are capable of accounting for VAT. All sales receipts issued to the final consumer must indicate the VAT charged. VAT-specified invoices will

need to be provided to customers who are registered businesses/taxpayers.

2. Understand the treatment of supplies that are: a) taxed - i.e. charged at the VAT rate b) zero-rated - i.e. charged at a rate of zero percent c) exempt - exempted from VAT
3. Analyse whether you are able to separate goods and services that are going to be taxed, from those that will be zero-rated or exempt. Remember, not all goods and services will attract a VAT.
4. Begin accurate record-keeping by getting the following: a) Sales Book; b) Purchases book c) Cash book
5. Implement any process changes, which includes training staff, particularly in the planning and receivable departments. Remember, the VAT Project will work closely with all businesses in this regard.

ALL ABOUT VAT!

Frequently Asked Questions

What is VAT and Value Added?

We all know that VAT stands for Value Added Tax. But what does that mean? Well, VAT is a tax that will be applied or levied on the value added to goods or services at every stage of the production and distribution chain.

Value added are the costs that a businesses adds to its inputs or purchases, before it sells its goods or services to a final consumer or another business. This is referred to as the business mark up.

Who is the Final Consumer?

A final consumer is anyone who buys goods or services for their personal consumption. In other words YOU!

VAT History

VAT is a modern tax which was first introduced in France in 1948. Currently, over 130 countries around the world have a Value Added Tax.

VAT in the Caribbean

In operation:

- Haiti (1982),
- Dominican Republic (1983),
- Trinidad & Tobago (1990),
- Jamaica (1991),
- Barbados (1997)
- Belize (2006)
- Dominica (2006)
- Guyana (2007)
- Antigua and Barbuda (2007)
- St. Vincent (2007)

Being introduced/Considered:

- Saint Lucia, St. Kitts

Being re-introduced:

- Grenada

VAT in St Lucia

Discussions on VAT began in 2003, when the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank (ECCB) recommended that all Eastern Caribbean countries introduce VAT as part of a tax reform. Tax reform is the process of changing the way taxes are collected or managed by government. Our Current tax system

Direct taxes - these are taxes that are all levied directly on an individual or a company receiving an income and are paid directly to the Inland Revenue Department. Some examples are: Income Tax, Corporate Tax and Withholding Tax

Indirect taxes - these are taxes on goods and services and are paid only when you buy or use a good or service. In St Lucia we have 15 indirect taxes. These include: Consumption Tax, Hotel Accommodation Tax, Mobile Cellular Tax, Environmental Service Charge and Insurance Premium Tax

Next Week: How does VAT react with other taxes?

VAT Steering Committee

The VAT Implementation Project Office has strived to educate the public on the VAT system being recommended for Saint Lucia. To date, the team has held several meetings with many stakeholders, associations and institutions and hopes to continue this trend in the coming weeks.

As mandated, the Vat Project has undertaken the necessary analyses relative to implementing a VAT. The approval of the first draft of those recommended VAT policies, regulations and legislations is within the purview of the policy-makers. To that end, a seven-member body, called the VAT Steering Committee has been established.

The committee comprises: Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Stephenson King, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Public Service and Human Resource - Phillip Dalsou, Director of Finance - Isaac Anthony, Comptroller of Inland Revenue - James Charles, Comptroller of Customs and Excise - Herman St Helen, Budget Director - Cointhia Thomas, representative of the Attorney General's Chambers - Dwight Lay and representative of the Private Sector - Jason Sambrano.

The main functions of this steering committee are to analyse recommendations and assess the impact on the business community and vulnerable groups, as well as to determine the effect of VAT on government policies.

THIS WEEK ON NTN

Sat. 31th to Sun. 30th
October 2009

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NEED

Station ID National
Anthem, Pledge
Programme Guide -
6.00 - 6:05

Take Two - The Week in
Review - 6:05 - 6:15

Your Right To Know -
6:15 - 6:30

Our Nation - Integrate Or
Perish #1 1963 - 1973 -
Years of Hope: The Dream

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