



NATIONWIDE

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The long-awaited rehabilitation works have commenced on the East Coast highway.

The first phase of the road works, which have been delayed by excessive climate change, commenced on Wednesday at the Grand Riviere Bridge and will continue to Fond d'Or in Dennery.

The contract for the works has been awarded to C.O. Williams and Com-

pany, a well-known construction firm in St. Lucia.

The second phase of the rehabilitation work on the East Coast Highway will commence later this year and that will be from Cul de Sac, all the way to the Grand Riviere Bridge, with other sections to follow.

Meanwhile, the Government of St. Lucia wishes to advise and urge motorists and pedestrians in particular, and members of the public in general, to

be patient as the rehabilitation works will cause inevitable slow-downs in traffic.

Most of the delay is expected to be in the area between Grand Riviere and La Caye and motorists are urged to bear with the inevitable irritations, bearing in mind that when the project is over, the East Coast Highway will, like that from Vieux Fort to Soufriere, be a stretch of road for St. Lucians to be proud of.

MINISTER PIERRE WANTS \$25 BANK FEE REDUCED

Minister for Consumer Affairs Hon Phillip J Pierre has taken issue with a \$25 fee charged by banks on the island for the issuance of letters of verification of account balances to consumers. The Minister has strongly

requested that the fee be reduced, in a letter to the banks dated February 25, 2005.

When clients request a letter of verification for the balances on their account from their banks, they must first pay \$25 in order to get that letter.

That fee, according to Minister for Consumer Affairs Phillip J Pierre is too high. The Minister said whereas banks may incur some cost to make the letter available, there is no justification for the exorbitant fee.

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"Take ②" - A fifteen minute news review of the week.
Every Friday at 6.15 p.m. on **NTN**, Cablevision Channel 2.

Government Notebook
A fresh news package
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CWC 2007: Dehring warns against complacency

Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of the ICC Cricket World Cup West Indies 2007 Chris Dehring, is warning countries chosen to host

be a priority at this time, even though it was two years away.

"The reality is, we have never hosted anything of this nature in the Caribbean, and we think we can put a few band-

can depend on," Mr. Dehring warned.

Mr Dehring went on to emphasise that it was important that the time lines set by the ICC in terms of organising the World Cup were met: "Financial li-

behind the time lines that have been set."

Mr Dehring called on the regional media to create incentives for the various local organising committees to car-

Sir George F.L. Charles Airport getting ready for CWC 2007 with construction of sheltered walkway to and from aircrafts



matches in the 2007 Cricket World Cup to guard against complacency.

Speaking at a Caribbean Media Exchange workshop in Trinidad recently, Mr Dehring said the World Cup should

aids on some things and patch it up in time for the event. The event won't be here if that's the attitude. Long before it becomes that kind of problem the ICC will take it somewhere else they

abilities are too big. The entire cricket world is relying on us to deliver. It's not just the West Indies that's relying on this. Long before it becomes a major problem it will be taken, if we fall

ry on, despite obstacles and challenges they face and to play a leading role in educating the regional public on the various obligations that have to be met in order to host a successful World Cup.

Governor-General to open Children Centre



New Child Development and Guidance Centre

The Child Development and Guidance Centre will be moving into its permanent home, following the official opening of a new structure on Friday, March 4, 2005. The building is located on the premises of the Donator School at Lapansee. The centre was established in 1998 as a non-profit organization formally operating out of the Donator school.

Director of the Child Development Guidance Centre, paediatrician and psychotherapist Dr. Brigitte Shuling, said the wooden structure was built through donations from local corporate sponsors and a German association.

"The child development guidance centre is a health facility providing comprehensive developmental assessment to children from birth to 16 years. Following his initial assessment the team comes up with an intervention program and individual therapy", Dr. Shuling informed, adding, "we are very grateful to Peter and Company, who has been our major sponsor as well as Metro Construction, Tropical Cooling, Mr. Claude Guiame, who drew the plans for the wonderful little building, and many, many friends of the CDGC,

who have donated time and fund to make this building possible".

Over the last seven years the Child Development Guidance Centre has assessed over 400 children with developmental delays, or varied disabilities. "It is an independent health agency, it is not to be taken for a school, it is important to know that it is a completely independent institution, with health professionals working, at the same time it is affiliated with the St. Lucia Association for Persons with Developmental Disabilities, and in that respect meets the health needs of children with developmental disabilities, and the school meets the education needs, the vocational training centre caters for the needs of the young adults with developmental disabilities", Dr. Shuling pointed out.

The team of professionals comprise a Paediatric Therapist, Speech Therapist, and later this year will have on board an Occupational Therapist.

Governor General Her Excellency Dame Pearlette Louisy is to cut the ribbon at the ceremony, which is due to start at 11:00 am.

PM to speak on integration at CLICO's awards ceremony

Prime Minister Honourable Dr. Kenny D. Anthony is to deliver the feature address at CLICO International Life Insurance's Annual Award Ceremony at the Sandals Grand St. Lucia on Saturday 12th March 2005.

Prime Minister Anthony is expected to speak on the issues of integration between Caribbean States and the progress of the Caribbean Single Market

and Economy (CSME). The awards, which will highlight the achievements of CLICO employees in St. Lucia and other Caribbean territories where the company operates, will be held outside of Barbados for the first time.

Speaking about the awards ceremony, Branch Administration Manager of CLICO International Insurance Ltd., Luciana Fevrier said, "Staff will be recognized and rewarded for their

outstanding performances. Staff and agents from CLICO group of companies in Barbados, St. Vincent, Grenada, Antigua and St. Kitts will be flown in, to attend the ceremony."

Mr. Leroy Paris, Chairman of CLICO Holdings Barbados and Mr. Lawrence Duprey, Executive Chairman of CL Financial Ltd., parent company of CLICO companies will also address the gathering.



Prime Minister
Dr. Kenny D. Anthony

FRC to honour cultural heroes

The Folk Research Centre has organized a ceremony for the “Remembrance of our cultural heroes”, as part of its activities to mark St. Lucia’s 26th anniversary of Independence. This took place on Saturday February 26th. Two cultural heroes were honored this year, the late Harold Simmons and Dame Sesenne Descartes. The FRC plans to celebrate the life and work of St. Lucia’s foremost cultural icons, both those who are still alive and those who have passed on.

The Remembrance event began at 3 pm at the Choc Cemetery where a memorial service was held for the late Harold Simmons who died in May 1966. Msgr. Patrick Anthony, the founder of the Folk Research Centre led the programme. The ceremony continued at 4 pm at the FRC headquarters where Kennedy ‘Boots’ Samuel spoke on the

life and work of Dame Sesenne Descartes and Dr. Didacus Jules, on the life and work of the late Harold Simmons. Cultural entertainment formed part of the remembrance.

Harold Simmons is regarded by many as the father of St. Lucian arts and culture. He was a tutor of both the Honorable Derek Walcott and the Honorable Dunstan St. Omer. Simmons was an artist, archaeologist, historian, botanist and a journalist who served as editor of the Voice newspaper. The Folk Research Centre, in association with the Castries City Council, plans to erect a marker in the cemetery to identify the resting place of Harold Simmons.

Dame Marie Selipha Sesenne Descartes, born March 1914 is popular in St. Lucia as Queen of Folk Culture. She received the St. Lucia Medal of Merit, and was knighted by the Queen



Bust of Sir Arthur Lewis

in 2000. She is resident at Mon Repos. This remembrance of St. Lucia’s cultural heroes, both living and deceased, has been in the planning by the FRC for a number of years.

For those who have died, the FRC will be identifying their graves, and plans to place appropriate markers on the final resting places of those who



Bust of Derek Walcott

have contributed significantly to the cultural development of St. Lucia. The FRC made this year’s event the first of what is being planned as an annual Independence activity.

Cultural activists and interested members of the public were invited to join the FRC in this Remembrance of cultural heroes.

Paul Kings Douglas andMighty Gabby for NCF Telethon

Renowned Caribbean comedian, Paul Kings Douglas along with Barbadian Calypsonian the Mighty Gabby will share the stage with several local artistes at the 3rd National Community Foundation (NCF) Telethon scheduled for April 3rd at the Pigeon Island National Park. This was revealed at the launch of this year’s event on February 28, at the conference room of the National Insurance Corporation. The launch brought together members of the local media, sponsors, and NCF beneficiaries.

Chairman of NCF, Donovan Williams said the telethon, which is the Foundation’s biggest fundraising event was extremely important to the opera-

tions of NCF. He said while the NCF had been successful in meeting its objectives, those successes had been marked by increased demands and expectations.

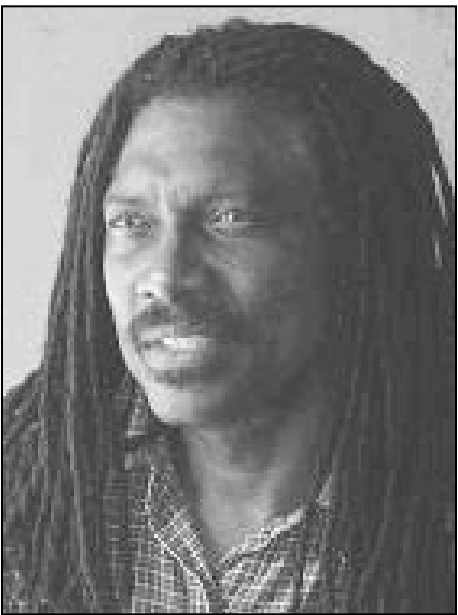
“This telethon and this launch is an appeal to us as a people again, to rally around those who are less fortunate. The entire nation, from the school child to the private sector to our leaders of government has to come around. I think everybody can make a contribution, everybody can touch the lives of the less fortunate”, Mr. Williams said.

Meanwhile, a call for more donations from individuals and corporate organizations and institutions has come from the Executive Director of the NCF,

Miss Jacintha Lee. Miss Lee said the success of the telethon would depend on the generosity of St. Lucians.

“For the first seven months of this financial year, which is from August last year to Friday, a total of 498 persons visited the office of the foundation. To put it bluntly, we need money, and to make you feel better about money the NCF stands by two terms that are very vogue and well used in St. Lucia; we are accountable and we are transparent. We publish our financial statement in newspapers and in the Gazette,” Miss Lee assured.

Since its inception in 2002, the NCF has disbursed over \$800,000 to 35 organizations and 267 individuals.



Mighty Gabby

A national telethon song has been produced by the Hewanorra Musical Society and the St. Lucia Association of Musicians, featuring local artistes. The song will be used to promote the telethon via the local media.

Young persons to explore their own business ideas

An opportunity for young persons to explore their own business ideas is being afforded by the start of a new youth entrepreneur scheme on the island. Stakeholders of the St. Lucia Youth Enterprise Development Project met last week for an orientation exercise, which will help facilitate smooth operation of the facility to function under the auspices of the James Belgrave Fund (BELFUND).

The exercise was also used to develop a better understanding of the philosophy and methodology governing the Commonwealth Youth Enterprise Development programme, a micro-credit and enterprise development initiative, designed to promote youth employment, aimed at alleviating poverty among young people in the Commonwealth.

Speaking at the orientation exercise last Friday, February 25, at the Mount of Prayer at Coubaril, Castries Minister for Social Transformation, Culture and Local Government Honourable Menis-

sa Rambally said the programme was expected to help alleviate the problems of unemployment among the island’s youth.

“This, in a sense is a call to the young people within our communities, who are seeking another type of opportunity

to create a livelihood for themselves, to create activity within their community, to create activity for themselves and their family. This programme also has as an objective to create economic diversity within our society. We believe that the economic growth of our so-

ciety is not dependent simply on our large entrepreneurs and big businessmen,” Minister Rambally said.

The venture is the collaborative effort of the Ministry of Social Transformations and the Commonwealth Programme Caribbean Centre.



BELFUND Office

China Friendship Association to hold first AGM on Monday



Governor-General meets China's Vice President, Zeng Qinghong

Members of the St. Lucia-China Friendship Association will gather on Monday for their first Annual General Meeting since its establishment one year ago.

The meeting, which takes place on March 7th, 2005, from 5:30 pm, at the National Insurance Corporation (NIC) Conference Room, on the 5th Floor of the NIC Building, the Waterfront, Castries, will address several issues relating to the strengthening of the association, which was launched on January 27, 2004 at the same venue.

Agenda items for Monday's meeting include: a Review of the First Year of the Association, Establishment of Cultural, Sports and Fundraising Committees, Election of Chairpersons to New

Committees, Plans for Fundraising, Plans for a Proposed Newsletter, a Plan of Action for Year Two of the Association and an Upcoming Visit to China by Members of the Association's Executive Committee.

The Executive has advised that members and other persons, who have signed and submitted Application Forms are to be reminded that mem-

bership fees are due.

Copies of the Constitution of the Association will also be available, as well as free copies of the book "Ten Days Behind The Great Wall" by Earl Bousquet. However, the Executive also says that free copies of the book will only be available to members who are in good financial standing.

Members are also invited to bring

other interested persons along, as Application Forms will be available. However, while members of the public may attend, only members and applicants will be allowed to participate in the meeting.

Since the St. Lucia-China Friendship Association was launched a year ago, it has hosted and participated in several activities, including celebration of the 55th anniversary of the establishment of the People's Republic of China and the ushering of the Spring Festival last month, which marked the beginning of the Chinese New Year with 2005 as the Year of the Rooster.

Members of the Executive of the Association will be visiting China in May, at the invitation of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, the parent body of Chinese Friendship Associations.

A delegation from the Parliament of St. Lucia, including the Speaker of the House of Assembly and the President of the Senate, has also been invited to visit China in May at the invitation of the leaders of the Chinese Parliament, also known as the Great Hall of the People.



Vice President Hon. Velon John, addresses the audience at the launch of the St. Lucia-China Friendship Association, whilst President Earl Bousquet looks on

Mite infestation creating problems for coconut trees

The Ministry of Agriculture is working along with the St. Lucia Coconut Growers Association to address a mite infestation of coconut trees. The problem, which was discovered last year is said to be impacting neg-

atively on production. Chairman of the Association, Ezekiel Joseph said the height of the trees was making it difficult to undertake any meaningful spraying program: "We are still awaiting the ministry as to possible

solutions to that situation. But also, as part of our five year strategic plan, we believe the time has come as an association to work hand in hand with government to undertake a rehabilitation program, because the last time we had a

program like that was 30years ago". Mr. Joseph added that remedying the mite infestation problem was imperative, particularly as the association was seeking to diversify into new products.



Few countries maximise the use of Hazard Maps - Study

The final report of "The Study of Hazard Maps, Vulnerability Assessments and Digital Maps in the Caribbean has been officially released. The study was commissioned by

the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency (CDERA), as an important first step for knowing the status of these tools, and to compile a database of relevant information and materials.

The study, which was conducted in 20 English, French and Spanish-speaking Caribbean states, revealed that a number of hazard maps were available across the region, but few countries were maximizing their use, with the

exception of Martinique and Puerto-Rico, where the use of vulnerability assessments in the planning process is legally enforced. Fourteen recommendations have been made as a result of the findings of the study, which if implemented could help in reducing the losses resulting from a disaster. The study was conducted by the Centre for Geospatial Studies, Faculty of Engineering, University of the West Indies, Trinidad and Tobago.

Regional prosecutors to form a body

A Caribbean Prosecutors Association could soon be a reality following a two-day seminar in Barbados of regional Directors of Public Prosecutions and senior prosecutors.

This was the recommendation of the nearly thirty lawyers, who represented thirteen Caribbean countries, which included Mrs Victoria Charles-Clarke, Acting Director of Public Prosecution and Inspector Sylvia Desir, Police Prosecutor from St Lucia. At their final session, they unanimously agreed that they would

set up the association, probably under the aegis of the International Prosecutors' Association.

The seminar was conducted by a team of facilitators headed by Anesta Weekes QC, chair of the UK Caribbean Jurists' Group, and included Sir David Calvert-Smith, immediate past DPP of England and Wales, Steve Gwilliam head of the anti corruption division at the Metropolitan Police, Judge Michael Lawson QC, Robert Drybrough-Smith, Crown Prosecution Service, and Deborah Mansfield Law Society.

Also addressing the seminar were Bar-

bados' Chief Justice, Sir David Simmons and Justice Adrian Saunders, Acting Chief Justice of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States. Justice Saunders was recently appointed as a Justice of the Caribbean Court of Justice.

Matters discussed included the independence of the prosecutor, handling of vulnerable witnesses, investigation and prosecution of corruption and sharing of expertise within the region as a whole. There was also widespread agreement that, despite differences in size, resources and procedures, there

is still common ground on judicial matters among the regional states, as well as with England and Wales. Barbados' Director of Public Prosecutions, Charles Leacock brought the Caribbean perspective in his address on removing barriers to prosecutions in the region.

A particularly valuable achievement was the invitation by the facilitators to the prosecutors to be more pro-active in attacking corruption both in police services and in government service.

The seminar was organised by the UK Caribbean Jurists' Group in collaboration with the British High Commission in Barbados.

Bureau of Standards helping to upgrade Metrology Units



Dr. Allison Plumber, Executive Director of Bureau of Standards

The Bureau of Standards wrapped up a two-day training exercise at their Bisee Offices this week, aimed at building the technical capacity of OECS Metrology Units.

The activity funded by the Caribbean Trade and Economic Competitiveness Project (C-TRADECOM) is part of a wider programme aimed at addressing the issues of competitiveness and trade expansion. It also helps position Caribbean countries to compete in the global economy.

"What we are trying to do is to impart them at least some basic knowledge and some skills so they can do the calibration and verification of some of the weighing and measuring devices that will be used for trade in particular

scales, weighbridges and petrol pumps, so that at least there will be some sort of consumer satisfaction", said Bertrand Harnanan, consultant to the project.

Metrology or the science of measurement is critical to economic development, as it provides the technical means to ensure correct measurements. The Caribbean region has recognized that accurate measurement is a key component in supporting fair trade and the protection of the consumer, Mr. Harnanan said.

According to him, "a lot of work has to be done in terms of metrology. Some of these countries have just enacted the metrology legislation, which means that they are now putting in place things like the equipment, buildings and getting their staff trained. St. Lucia is one of the countries that have gone a little bit ahead; they have the metrology lab and they have metrology officers".

The exercise was attended by locals who sell, repair or adjust weights or use weighing devices, flow meters and volume measures in trade.

REACH to assist with foster care programme

REACH International based in Canada will be assisting the Department of Human Services and Family Affairs with a foster care program to be launched shortly.

This comes on the heels of an extensive refurbishment exercise at the Soufriere Children's Home undertaken by REACH one week ago, involving Governor-General, Dame Pearlette Louisy, in the establishment of

a national child sponsorship program, aimed at assisting 750 - 1,000 children annually.

Phillip Tibien of Reach International said the organization would assist the department in acquiring some of the advanced technology currently being used in Canada in the areas of social welfare, child abuse and foster care. He said he would be working closely with the Director of Human Services and Family Affairs, Miss Clementia

Eugene to bring the foster care project to fruition.

"We're assisting her with educational materials, brochures, pamphlets and hopefully a computer program that tracks all the children. Our long-term goal here on the island working with the Governor-General is to establish a national child sponsorship program. The overall goal will be a budget of about a quarter million dollars a year, to hopefully assist between 750 - 1000

children annually", Mr. Tibien said.

Reach International which stands for Relief Education and Child Sponsorship is a charitable organization initiated by Phillip Tibien, following a trip to St. Lucia in 1998. While the organization is providing assistance to countries globally, St. Lucia is the only Caribbean beneficiary country of REACH International sponsorship at this time.

Logo for Pitons Management Area coming

Efforts to identify a winning logo for the Pitons Management Area (PMA) moved closer to realisation, when the panel of judges for the competition met on Wednesday, February 23, 2005.

The panel of judges, which includes Adrian Augier, Milton Branford and Darnley Lebourne reviewed 27 submissions. Of these three were short-listed.

In the process of selecting the short-listed entries, the judges determined that there were specific short-comings in respect of each entry, which if addressed would further enhance the quality and representation of each logo in respect of the PMA.

The panel of judges therefore, took the decision to grant the producers of the logs in question, a second chance to

attend to the short-comings cited and to re-submit their entries.

Following receipt of the re-submission, the judges will meet for a final time to determine the winning logo, along with the second and third prize winners.

The prize for the winner is \$1,000 compliments of the Bank of St. Lucia, Soufriere branch; the second prize is an all-inclusive weekend for two at the Still Plantation Resort, compliments of the property owners; and the third prize is a tour of the Soufriere Estate Mineral Baths and \$100 shopping voucher, compliments of the Soufriere Estates Limited and Erolene Foods.

The winning logo will be presented to the public, through a media launch to be staged shortly.



Governor-General, Dame Pearlette Louisy presents Charter for the Pitons to Mr. Koichio Matsuura, UNESCO's Director-General

SLASPA to stage airline crash at Sir George F.L. Charles Airport

The St. Lucia Air and Sea Ports Authority (SLASPA), is on track with its obligation under the International Civil Aviation Organization, to undertake a biennial emergency review exercise. On Wednesday, the Authority held a one-day consultation at the Green Parrot Hotel, which brought together, disaster emergency agencies to review emergency procedures for George F.L. Charles Airport.

The review came ahead of the 2005 emergency simulation exercise scheduled for November this year. SLASPA undertook its last emergency review in 2002.

Manager of the George FL Charles Airport, Michael Lee said, “As dictated by international civil aviation organization, each airport must hold an emergency exercise once every two years, but before we can hold that exercise, we need to review our procedures to make sure that they are current and



Sir George F.L. Charles Airport, Vigie, Castries

then go through the exercise”.

Mr. Lee said he was pleased that most of the agencies were there and was happy about the interaction they were having. “We are looking forward to getting the document reviewed and prepared, and the training exercise that will continue from now until November will get us all prepared for that exercise”, he added.

The 2005 full scale emergency simulation at the George FL Charles Airport will be managed by the National Emergency Management Organization (NEMO), and will involve the staged crashing of an aircraft: “You will have the action by the fire services; the action by the regular police; the action by the airlines on how they would deal with an aircraft crash. Also, they will be reviewing the action by the air traffic controller on duty, in initiating the calls and informing everybody, involving all the agencies of the aircraft accident”, Mr. Lee informed.

CSME Seminar emphasises the need to capitalise on opportunities

December 2005 will signal a critical juncture in the life of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) as it will be the time when Member States are expected to begin full participation in the CARICOM Single Market (CSM), the twin element of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME).

When CARICOM Heads of Government conceptualised the CSME at Grand Anse, Grenada in 1989, they articulated the formation of a seamless single economic space bearing features including the Right of Establishment facilitate the movement of goods, services and capital across the Region to enhance market com-

petitiveness and extra-Regional trade arrangements.

The removal of barriers to trade and the harmonisation of legislation in Member States are key elements for the operation of the CSM. To this end, as CARICOM countries continue on the path to meet the December 2005 deadline, the Region’s private sector is increasing its participation to maximise the benefits from the Single Market process.

On Monday 28 February 2005, representatives from Guyana’s private and manufacturing sectors benefitted from a sensitisation seminar under the theme, “Business Opportunities from Liberalising Services in the CSME.” The Guyana Trade and Investment

Support (GTIS) - a joint Government of Guyana and United States Government Project, facilitated the forum.

One of the speakers at the forum, Hon Clement Rohee, Guyana’s Minister of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation and recently appointed CARICOM spokesperson on Sugar, commended the GTIS for spearheading the session, and he stated, “The CSME is on the cusp of creating a genuine liberalised market by the end of 2005.”

The CARICOM Secretariat’s Programme Manager for the CSME, Mr. Ivor Carryl, gave a comprehensive presentation on the potential role of and benefits for the private sector in providing services under a CSM regime. He underscored the need for a national CSME strategy and urged that such a strategy be embraced in the legislative agenda at the national level. He stressed that countries should adopt a non-partisan parliamentary approach to the CSM process.

The CSME Programme Manager added that Member States, such as Guyana, which are in the process of completing the required arrangements for full participation in the CSM, should implement public education programmes to prepare stakeholders for its introduction. In directing his

presentation to the private sector audience, Mr. Carryl recommended that they undertake market research, for the purpose of identifying consumer demands and niche markets. He also singled out the creation of a website by the private sector to inform stakeholders and service providers on the rights, laws and regulations required by each Member State for participation in the CSM.

In citing the need to broaden their vision as they prepare to enter the CSME, Mr. Carryl told his audience, “Plan for occupation of the Regional market; increase Regional market access know-how and market shares; deepen skills and source skills Regionally; and adopt a Regional market consumer share approach.”

He also encouraged the establishment of youth entrepreneurship as a mechanism for job creation in the Region, and the retaining of skills that are constantly being lost to developed countries.

The seminar came as part of the public education initiative of the CARICOM Secretariat’s Barbados based CSME Unit, which responds to stakeholders’ demand for sensitisation, and supports national public education programmes.

CDERA seeking to improve response to disasters

The Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency (CDERA), convened a one-day meeting of regional agencies on Wednesday, to discuss opportunities for improving response to disasters. The meeting, held in Barbados, came against the background of intense disaster events in 2004 – 2005.

Co-ordinator of CDERA, Mr. Jeremy Collymore, said this was an integral part of the broad-based efforts among regional stakeholders, to share experience and lessons learnt from the management of these challenging events.

The events of the past seven months, he added, have underscored the need to

re-examine the regional arrangements for responding to disasters in member states of the Caribbean Community. The review will examine the capacity

of each agency to respond to disasters, as part of CDERA’s Regional Response Mechanism (RRM).

The agencies invited to attend were:



Grenada after Hurricane Ivan

the Caribbean Development Bank; the Caribbean Environmental Health Institute; the Caribbean Epidemiology Centre; the Caribbean Institute for Meteorology and Hydrology; Caribbean Tourism Organization; Insurance Association of the Caribbean; Organization of Eastern States -Environmental and Sustainable Development Unit; the Seismic Research Unit; the University of the West Indies and CARDI.



Guyana Floods

Elderly and Disabled exempted from payment for replacement of ID Cards

The Government of St. Lucia has announced that certain categories of persons will now be exempt from having to pay to replace lost or destroyed national ID cards.

According to the latest issue of the St. Lucia Gazette, the Prime Minister, who is the Minister responsible for National Elections and Registration of Voters, has announced that certain categories of persons will now be exempt from payment for the replacement of ID cards.

The categories now exempted include: “A person who provides evidence that his or her name appears on the Government’s Public Assistance Record” or “a person with a disability who shows evidence, or who, in



Elderly and disabled persons

the opinion of the Chief Elections Officer, has a bona fide claim that he or she cannot engage in full-time employment because of the disability.”

Other categories exempted include persons 70 years and older, but persons between 60 and 70 years may also be exempted at the discretion of the Chief Elections Officer.

A person, who provides evidence that his or her ID card is defaced, mutilated, lost or destroyed as a result of fire, natural disaster or theft may also be exempted from having to pay for a replacement.

The amendment was made to the House of Assembly (Elections) (Fees) (Amendment) Regulations on February 8 through Statutory Instrument No. 11 of 2005.

At the end of the exercise, the Chief Elections Officer is required to produce a list of names of all persons whom he or she has exempted from payment of the fees and shall provide a copy of such list to the Electoral Commission.

Communities being assisted to access credit

A number of St. Lucian financial institutions participated in a Credit Fair in the community of Anse La Raye last week Sunday, as part of a DFID-funded project being executed by the University of the West Indies (Trinidad). The project aims to address deficiencies, which were identified in policy implementation at the community level.

The Sunday initiative sought to bridge the gap in access to financing

by working with credit institutions to make their products more visible and accessible to members of these coastal communities.

St. Lucia’s Project Co-ordinator for the UWI/DFID Sustainable Livelihoods Project, Colette McDermott said the Anse-La-Raye exercise was highly successful: “Seven institutions exhibited at the fair, and we had quite a good cross-section of community members coming out to view the fair. Possibly, the liveliest part of the fair was when

we effectively stop the fair and had a group discussion at the venue, and it was an excellent discussion, with lots of feedback, lots of information and lots of two-way communication.”

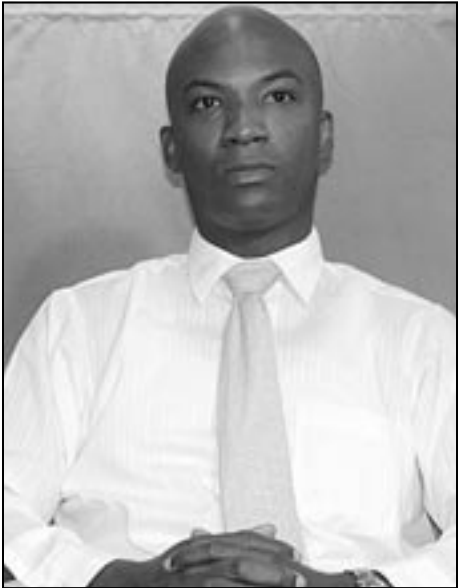
The project, into its second phase, selected the communities of Anse La Raye and Praslin in St. Lucia, as well as communities in Grenada and Belize, to illustrate ways in which the model of community-based sustainable tourism can be a viable alternative to community development.

“What we doing is focusing on looking at ways in which there might be a gap between government policy intent and actual implementation on the ground. In the first phase of the project, what we found is that, while there is a

very clear government policy towards supporting micro and small business development in St. Lucia, one of the obstacles appeared to be access to credit”, Ms. McDermott said.

The work done during this phase of the project, she said illustrated that community members, specifically ones engaged in alternative livelihood commercial activities of the Fish Fry at Anse La Raye and Sea-Moss production in Praslin, found it difficult, if not impossible, to access the funds needed to start, expand or improve their businesses.

The next Credit fair to be held in the community of Praslin will be scheduled for some time in April, following a post-mortem of the Anse La Raye exercise.



Stephen Fevriere, Foreign Service Officer in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Coalition of Services Industries to have positive impact



Althea Valmont, Interim President of the St. Lucia Coalition of Services Industries

Stakeholders of a recently formed Coalition of Services Industries in St. Lucia will get an opportunity on the weekend to learn more about the work of the organization and discuss its future importance to the services sector on the island and the wider region.

The exercise, to take place at the NIC Conference Centre on Saturday, March 5th, 2005 is being conducted ahead of the official launch of the organization, slated for sometime in April of this year.

The event will help sensitize stakeholders to the issues and purpose of the organization, in anticipation of some of the challenges that professionals and organizations providing services will have to face, because of St. Lucia’s association with various trading arrange-

ments, such as the Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME) and the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

It has taken two years of consultations between government, the OECS Trade Policy Project and the Chamber

of Commerce to bring the coalition to this point. An interim board was set up in November of 2004, to put in place the institutional and legal structures necessary for the establishment of the organization.

Interim President of the St. Lucia Coalition of Services Industries, Althea Valmont said, “The coalition of services is an organization, which focuses on meeting some of those challenges and informing those who may be affected by these changes of ways of meeting these challenges.”

According to Foreign Service Officer in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Stephen Fevriere, the services sector in St. Lucia contribute significantly to the overall gross domestic product (GDP), and therefore it has been recognized that it is important for the sector to or-

ganize itself to more effectively feed into governmental policy.

“It is very important that at this time, the services sector appreciate the importance of what is happening multilaterally and can use this forum to create and affect policy, which will be beneficial to their interest, and help feed these policies into government policy; that is one component. The other component is at the national level, assisting the services providers in enhancing their service capacity to compete,” Mr. Fevriere explained.

CARICOM Council of Trade and Economic Development (COTED) at a meeting in 2001, agreed to the formation of national coalitions of Services Industries in each member state of the Community. To date, only Barbados and St. Lucia have established coalitions.

“It is very important that at this time, the services sector appreciate the importance of what is happening multilaterally and can use this forum to create and affect policy, which will be beneficial to their interest”

Six Commercial Banks: Reduce the fee - Minister Pierre



Hon. Phillip J. Pierre

Continued from front page

“What argument can you use for charging \$25 for one sheet of paper with three or four lines? I understood that the bank should be charging some fee. I was saying that \$25 was too much and that the banks should reduce that amount, because it is really a burden on most consumers,” Minister Pierre said.

The Minister’s letter dated 25th February, 2005 was copied to all media houses and has been forwarded to the Caribbean Central Bank. He informed further: “I must add, the banks are really monitored and regulated by the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank. So this is why I did copy the letter to the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank. They are regulators for the commercial banks in St. Lucia and the OECS.”

Minister Pierre said that kind of information provided by the banks through



verification letters is also required by third parties, such as the Inland Revenue and pointed out that customers are compelled to pay the huge fee, if they



want to comply with the requests of the third party. The Minister said this was unfair and should be corrected as soon as possible.



New regional yachting initiative launched

Many Islands, One Sea! The idea of marketing the Caribbean region as a single destination for yachting is a vision dear to the hearts of many. This vision is one step closer, following a 3-day workshop for officials of marine trades associations and public sector officials from 12 Caribbean nations held in Trinidad from Feb.22-24. The workshop considered discussion papers presented on policy issues and a work programme from ALL Inc. of St. Lucia; and the adoption of a Constitution and an organizational framework from Tourism Global of Barbados, for the new Caribbean Marine Association.

The initiative came from the Yacht Services Association of Trinidad & Tobago (YSATT). The Antigua Marine Trades Association (AMTA), the Marine and Yachting Association of Grenada (MAYAG), and the Marine Industries Association of St. Lucia (MIASL) partnered YSATT, and with assistance from the Trinidad-based Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), obtained a grant of 47,176 euros from EU funding agency PROINVEST in mid-2004 to finance the setup of the CMA. Other national marine trades associations and public sector partners from across the region were then invited to participate.

The importance of this event was un-

derscored by the speakers at the opening ceremony, comprising the President of YSATT, Mr. Christopher Marshall; Mr. Neil Pierre, Director ECLAC; Mr. Anthony Smallwood, Charge d’Affaires, European Union Delegation; and Ms. Christine Sookram, deputizing for the



Participants in session at the ECLAC Conference Room

Minister of Tourism of Trinidad & Tobago.

The Caribbean Marine Association will place the Yachting Sector in the region on the same footing as the Caribbean Hotel Association, especially in forums, such as the Caribbean Tourism Organisation (CTO), thereby giving Yachting a seat at the highest levels of decision making bodies in the Tourism Sector for the first time.

The workshop hammered out a work programme, but referred the finalization of the constitution to a steering committee, which will report within

90 days, so that the formal launching of the Association can be undertaken. The committee will also examine the ramifications of the devastation caused by Hurricane Ivan on Marine Insurance rates in the Region. The twenty-three participants came from Antigua, Baha-

mas, Barbados, Belize, British Virgin Islands, Curacao, Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, St. Lucia, St. Vincent & The Grenadines, Trinidad & Tobago. In addition to the National Marine Trade Associations, representatives came from the CTO, the OECS, Ministries of Tourism, and National Development Corporations.

The participants wish to express their thanks to Jacqueline Clarke of YSATT, Marie-Louise Norton-Murray of PROINVEST, and Erik Blommenstein of ECLAC for their invaluable assistance to the development of the Caribbean Yachting product.



THIS WEEK ON NTN

Sat. Mar. 5th - Fri. Mar. 11th, 2005

- Celebrating International Women’s Day – “Women Speaking Out” Saturday 5th March, 8:00 p.m.
- HAITI: Land of Development & Promise - Sat. Mar. 5th, 7:30 p.m.
- Caribbean Collections 2004 - Sat. Mar. 5th, 9:00 p.m.
- Flavouring St. Lucia: Discover how to grow fresh water fish and make several tomato dishes (Latest Edition) – Sun. Mar.6th, 8:00 p.m.
- How to Fill Your Income Tax Returns – Sun. Mar. 6th, 8:30 p.m.
- The GIS speaks with the UK Adviser to Prisons - Mon. Mar. 7th, 6:15 p.m.
- BELFund: Providing A Way Out for the Unemployed - Mon. Mar. 7th, 6:30 p.m.
- The CSME: “Not Waiting; An Imperative Business” – Tues. March 8th, 7:30 p.m.
- Feedback (Rebroadcast) – Wed. Mar. 9th, 9:00 p.m.
- The GIS Speaks with Officials of Organizations Responsible for Poverty Reduction Projects in St. Lucia – Thurs. Mar. 10th, 8:00 p.m.
- Concert of Hope, Inspiration & Praise – Friday Mar. 11th, 7:30 p.m.
- Remember to tune in for:
- GIS News Breaks and Kweyol News daily from 6:30 p.m.
- Issues & Answers/Mondays at 8:00pm:
- Interview/Tuesdays at 6:15pm :
- Konsit Kweyol/Tuesdays at 8:00pm (Kweyol Discussion):
- Your Right to Know/Thursdays at 6:15 p.m. (Min. of Ed. Prog).
- Take 2/Fridays at 6:15pm (Week in Review)
- Weflechi/Fridays at 6:40pm - (Week in Review—Kweyol)

For the complete programme guide, log on to our website at www.stlucia.gov.lc and then click on the NTN icon.

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