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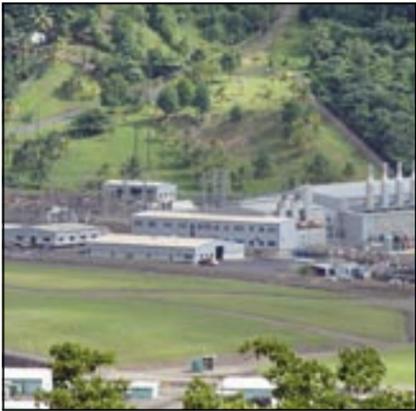
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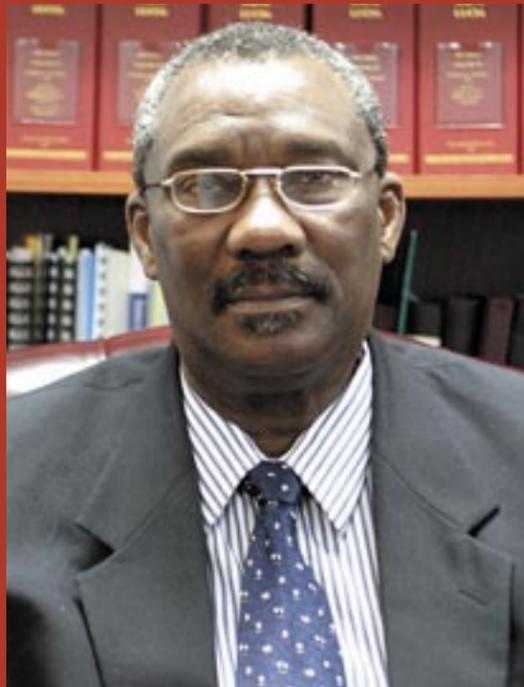


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Police recover more illegal firearms - page 6

ROYAL ST. LUCIA POLICE FORCE TO REACH 1000 MAN MARK SOON



NO TIME FOR COMPLACENCY SAYS INTERNAL SECURITY MINISTER



Fifty nine (59) recruits comprising 47 males and 12 females have been added to the Royal St. Lucia police force following the 25th graduation exercise last Friday which took place on the grounds of the Police Training School, bringing the force's population to 941.

The ceremony was attended by Prime Minister Hon. Dr. Kenny Anthony and members of Cabinet.

The new junior officers went through 9 months of intense training - the first batch of students to have exceeded the 6 months of training offered by the institution since its inception 1981,

While the new batch of police officers will be putting an incision into the public's purse, the Internal Security Minister Senator the Hon. Calixte George believes that the public is getting value for money. The quality of officers coming out of course 25 he says is of a high standard.

"Both the PM and myself felt that it was necessary to do a very intensive series of courses, because the nature of polic-

ing these days is different from what we knew it to be. The policeman has to be a jack of all trades. He is not only involved with merely police work, but with counselling, providing advice and other duties to the communities," he added. In his frank no-nonsense style, Senator George warned the new officers that this was not the time for complacency and that the actual work had just begun.

During Friday's graduation exercise Prime Minister Hon. Dr. Kenny Anthony announced that in honour of the graduants of Course 25 and the work of the institution over the years, the Police Training School will now be called the Royal St. Lucia Police Academy.

While Dr. Anthony was full of praise for the new recruits he took the opportunity to warn the "lambs" who will soon be confronted by the daring "wolves". "The time has come," he said, "when you have to make a choice between betraying your fellow officers or upholding the law to which you have sworn allegiance. The time will also come when some will seek to compromise your loyalty to the state, for narrow

partisan purposes. What will the choice be when that moment comes? The choice ought to be clear. Your duty is to the constitution of the state, the constitution of St. Lucia and the laws which that constitution authorises."

The Baton of Honour was awarded to Woman Police Constable Stephanie Henry who implored her fellow junior officers to execute their vested duties with pride and dedication. She reminded them that, "from this day forth we will no longer be protected by the parameters of this institution. We will now be exposed to the reality of the real world."

Meantime, in light of the growing number of street crimes, the Prime Minister has applauded the initiative by the police force to review and rationalize the number of officers in its clerical and managerial areas as the hierarchy of the force seeks to assign more officers to field duties.

A further 60 officers - taking the number of police officers to just over 1000 - will be recruited at the Royal St. Lucia Police Academy in coming months



"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 daily on all local radio stations



National workshop to sensitize stakeholders coming soon

Saint Lucia joins movement to minimize impacts of genetically modified creations



Ave Maria School's presentation on GMOs and Biosafety with Consumer Affairs Department and Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

St. Lucia is currently engaged in developing a national bio-safety framework for the country. What is Biosafety and why is such a framework important for St. Lucia? By now most of us must have heard of the term "genetically modified organisms" or GMOs. The theme for World Consumer Rights Day 2005 celebrated on March 15th and promoted by the Consumer Affairs Department was "Consumers say no to GMOs". This theme raises red flags in the mind.

Genetically modified organisms are living creatures which have been produced by laboratory modification, in an attempt to produce an improved organism. These structures are called genes, which are the basic units of the deoxy-ribose nucleic acid or DNA, which contains the blue print of life for all living organisms. Characteristics or traits that genes code, includes height, colour of eyes, colour of hair and resistance to diseases among many others.

Scientists are recognizing more and more that the interactions of genes with each other, the rest of the living organism and the natural environment are very complex and there-in lies the challenge.

Although genetically modified organisms may produce improved products such as more nutritious and pest resistant crops or cheaper medicines, they may also cause toxic reactions in the body, allergies or antibiotic resistance as well as super weeds, contamination of native species and other environmental problems. This is where the concept of Biosafety comes in.

Biosafety is the management system that is established to minimize the possible negative impacts that may arise from the use, transfer, handling or creation of genetically modified organisms or their products so that dangers to the environment and human health may be reduced.

These concerns are brought about by the impact of globalization on trade where we currently cannot make definitive statements on whether GM organisms or products are entering the country. As a result, developing countries through international negotiations pushed for an agreement to be formulated and adopted to address these issues. Through this agreement, countries would agree to

establish systems to assist one another in minimizing the negative impacts of living modified organisms on human health and the environment. These living modified organisms (LMOs) include seeds, plants and animals that have been genetically modified. The agreement is called the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and it was adopted in 2000, came into force in September 2003 and St. Lucia acceded to the protocol on the 16th June 2005.

Through funding provided by the United Nations Environment Program-Global Environment Facility (UNEP-GEF), St. Lucia is currently undertaking the drafting of its National Biosafety Framework (NBF). The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries is the National Executing Agency. This project which commenced in April 2004 and is due to be finished by December 31st 2005, comprises a variety of activities. These include public education productions such as jingles, publications and presentations to various groups, including school children, Disaster Preparedness Committees of the National Emergency Management Organisation (NEMO), the Solid Waste Management Authority Contractors and staff, members of the Library Services of St. Lucia, farmers, food handlers and other stakeholders - the goal

being to help these persons understand the concept, what is at stake and their role in the entire process.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries has worked closely with the Consumer Affairs Department of the Ministry of Commerce in making presentations to schools and relevant stakeholders on the subject.

Training workshops have also been held for technical persons in risk assessment, management and communication and decision making as far as genetically modified organisms and their products are concerned. Through these consultations the main elements of the framework have been outlined namely the administrative system which includes a competent national authority to deal with notifications about possible creations and import of GMOs, a regulatory system which will create the laws and methods of enforcement to guide the framework, a public participation system with mechanisms to allow the views of the public to be brought on board in decision making about the import or possible creation of the GMOs and finally a decision making system which includes risk assessment, management and communication, so that rigorous scientific analysis will be undertaken in order to decide whether the GMO should be allowed

in the country.

An extensive survey of various agencies and institutions in the country was also undertaken to ascertain the readiness of the country for Biosafety management; it also identified the gaps that exist and the needs that must be supplied to help the country become biosafety compliant. This survey also included identifying the centres of genetic resources that need to be protected from contamination by genetically modified organisms. The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries collaborated with the Government Statistics Department in designing the survey instrument and executing training for administering the surveys.

A database has been developed to store the information produced by the surveys. This database will later be linked to the International Biosafety Clearing House or BCH, which provides information on the internet on the progress of countries in Biosafety management.

A national workshop with stakeholders will soon be undertaken to present the findings of the survey and to get the input of participants into the various elements of the framework that have been formulated. The framework will then be completely drafted and then presented again to stakeholders for their final comments before the project is completed. The project is under the oversight of a multi-sectoral stakeholder committee, the National Coordinating Committee (NCC), comprising representatives from the public, and private sectors and non-governmental organizations. The NCC is chaired by Mr. Julius James of the St. Lucia Bureau of Standards.

A subsequent project will assist the country in implementing the framework. The project is also available to give presentations on GMOs and Biosafety to any interested organization.

For further information, please contact Ms. Anita James, National Biosafety Project Coordinator at the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries at 4684122/27 or e-mail at biodivproject@slubiodiv.org.

FOTO FACTS

LEADING THE WAY - NTN is now a beacon and symbol for reflecting the aspirations and activities of the local population. Students from the Kid's Summer Safari visited the GIS' studio Wednesday to obtain a better understanding of the operations of the popular television station.



Statistics Department Undertakes Survey of Living Conditions from Sunday

Results will guide government's socio-economic policies

A survey of living conditions is a comprehensive survey which combines a survey of living conditions with a survey of household income and expenditure. It is a rich source of socio-economic information on the household population and is often regarded as an essential source of data for the determination of social needs and establishment of targets for development planning.

This survey has two main objectives. Firstly, it is designed to collect information from the country's households and families on their buying habits (expenditures), income and other characteristics. The strength of the survey is that it allows data users to relate the expenditures and income of consumers to the characteristics of those same consumers.

This combined survey is also used for the purpose of revising the weighting patterns of the CPI (Consumer price index) and the list of goods and services in the "basket". The Consumer Price Index (CPI), sometimes referred to as "the inflation rate" is one of the key economic indicators, which measures the changes in the purchasing power of money and is closely monitored by economic planners, policy makers, the business community and labour unions.

In addition this survey provides valuable data for an assessment of the impact of socio-economic policies on the conditions and levels of living of households, inputs for the compilation of national accounts of the household sector which is a useful in the process of calculating the growth rate of the economy.

Statistics on the distribution of income and expenditure help to determine the percentage of the wealth of

St. Lucia which is owned by each income group. Information on the poor, their characteristics, expenditures patterns when compared to other groups in the society are important factors that will be considered.

In addition, information on household consumption of various goods and services, information to assess the cost of provision of health services and the level of satisfaction of the population



Staff at the Statistics Department working feverishly to ensure that all goes well

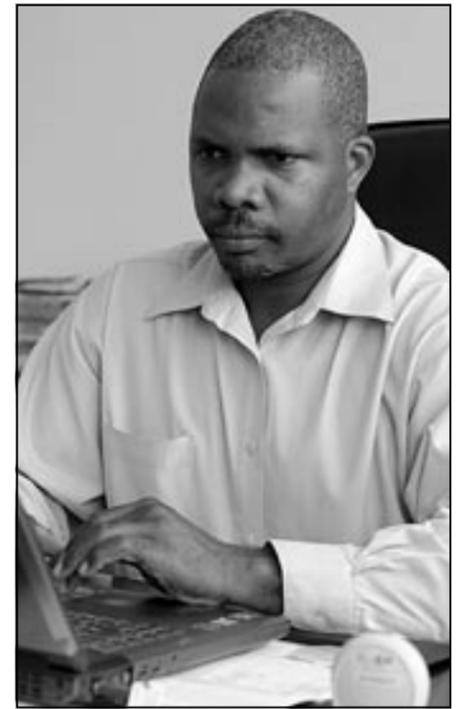
with its provision and information to assess the cost of the provision and expenditure of households on education and the level of satisfaction of the population with what is provided are critical elements that must be researched if a true picture of living conditions must emerge.

Conducting the survey of living conditions and household budgets

The spender is one of the central respondents to this survey. A spender is defined as a person 18 years of age and

over or an employed person irrespective of age.

For this survey, the statistics department will be providing a sum of \$15 EC per spender completing two one-week daily diary questionnaires using the memory joggers. Most households will have two spenders and will be entitled to receive a sum for \$30 dollars if that is the case. If there are more spenders in the household, more money will be received by the household.



Director of Statistics Edwin St. Catherine

always have the "memory jogger" close by to record the good or service purchased and the cost for each item of expenditure made during each day of the two-week period. The householder will then be required to transfer the information from his/her memory jogger to the household daily diary on a daily basis.

While the payment will be made on the basis of the completed diary, completed memory joggers are the best way to verify that the daily diary was fully and properly completed.

The \$15 EC provided is an incentive provided by the Statistics Department to each household spender to express the department's gratitude for householders' willingness to participate in the survey.

Information provided will be protected by the Statistics Act of 1973, which prevents the Statistical office from allowing personal information to be exposed and mandates that all information published will be summarized so that information gained from individuals or households will be indefinable. Indeed, persons at the Statistical Department can be prosecuted under the 1973 Act for releasing personal information on any individual or household.

The in-depth survey is scheduled to commence on August 14th and will culminate on December 17th 2005.

ACP Banana Exporting Countries Respond to Arbitrator's Award Issued in Geneva on August 1, 2005

Once again the ACP banana exporting countries have seen their trade in another agricultural lifeline product endangered by a ruling in a WTO process. This underscores the ACP's ongoing concern about the marginalization of vulnerable economies from global trade.

The ACP Banana Exporting Countries were granted only limited participation in the arbitration process. Our conviction is that the mandate of the Arbitrator, as set out in the Annex to the Doha Waiver, does not permit the Arbitrator to extend to a judgement on

the preferential tariff treatment for ACP banana exports to the European Communities. Regrettably, although this limitation was recognised, a negative opinion on the preferential tariff was rendered, thus undermining the very fabric of the ACP-EU banana trade.

It is instructive that the award made no reference to the submissions of the ACP countries although they would be the ones most affected by the award. It does not appear that there was any appreciation of the fact that for the ACP, the European Communities provide the sole market for bananas, while the MFN

producers dominate the global market.

Already the banana industries and small farmers in the ACP countries have sounded the warning about the dire consequences of this award. The potential impact on national economies cannot be underestimated, at a time when Governments are already challenged in their efforts to achieve their Millennium Development Goals.

What is clear is that should the preferential tariff be set at a low level, the MFN producers will succeed in completely excluding the ACP producers from their sole export market. Of par-

ticular concern is the likely impact on rural areas, where employment opportunities are scarce, and where social safety nets are inadequate and in some cases, non-existent.

The ACP countries expect that the next phase of negotiations and a possible second arbitration will result in a solution which will preserve ACP market access. To this end, we are committed to consultations with the European Commission, as well as with the interested parties (the MFN producers) on all matters of concern in the arbitrator's award.

Vacancy Notice

Royal Saint Lucia Police Force - RSLPF

A professional community policing service, providing crime reduc-

tion, improved road safety and a safer environment.

Applications are invited from suitably qualified persons to fill in the post of Police Recruits. Successful applicants will be responsible for maintenance of Law and Order, the Protection of Life and Property and the Preven-

tion and Detection of Crime.

Qualifications/Abilities - Minimum of 5 (five) CXC General Subjects or its equivalent including English. Age: 18 - 35 years. Good Communications and Interpersonal Skills. Computer Literacy will be an asset.

Principle Responsibilities - To deal

with all aspects of law enforcement and the administration of justice.

Applicants should obtain a prescribed form from any police station or at the Police Head Quarters, Bridge Street, Castries.

Applications should be returned no later than Friday September 2, 2005

PETROCARIBE - A Possible Gateway to Greater Energy Security?

An old issue
Today, I want to return to an issue that is at the forefront of the minds of many Saint Lucians. From all corners of our society, voices are already being heard expressing concerns about the steep increases in the price of crude oil on the world market.

I have heard concerns from almost everyone, everywhere, from the hoteliers to bus drivers, from the farmers in the fields of Cul-de-Sac and Roseau Valleys, to the fishermen of Dennery, Vieux Fort and Anse La Raye, and from the businessmen in the heart of Castries to the bartenders of Soufriere.

The effects of the increasing cost of fuel on the world market are inescapable and the impact will be felt by every Saint Lucian. For the Government, the steady increase in the price of crude oil is worrying. The consequences of spiraling oil prices have the potential of undermining our economic stability and long term growth prospects.

On Monday, August 1st, the world oil market responded to the death of King Fahd of Saudi Arabia by reaching new record highs of US \$62 per barrel.

From all indications, the current economic boom being experienced by China and India are certain to ensure that oil prices remain high; the continuing instability in the Middle East provides no comfort. Of greater concern is the prediction by analysts and other energy experts that the price of crude oil on the world market may peak at US \$100 per barrel. For us, such a prospect is, indeed, frightening.

Floodgate to inflation

The question is: Can our fragile economy, already battered by adjustments to the commodity regime for our bananas, withstand the onslaught of this oil crisis? That is a question I am certain that the bus drivers or ordinary motorists who ply our roads and who must buy gas or diesel, would prefer never to have to answer. I am certain too, that it is a question that our fishermen would prefer not to consider. The same holds true for our farmers, our hoteliers, our retailers and wholesalers, and to you the ordinary citizen who feels the pinch in the pocket and in the cost of living.

I need not remind you that the cost of energy is very important in determining the final price that the consumer -- you and I -- pay for basic goods and services. A basic understanding of the laws of commerce and business practices tells us that increases in the price of oil will lead to increases in the cost of production and in the cost of shipping or transporting goods. Increases in freight charges will be reflected in increases in the price of basic foodstuffs. Likewise, increases in oil prices correspond to increases in the cost of providing electricity. Increases in oil prices have also pushed up the prices of airline tickets for travelers as a result of surcharges imposed by the airlines; as a result, the cost of vacations for tourists have increased. Meanwhile, the Government is losing millions in revenue each day by subsidizing domestic oil prices at the pumps.

The Government is fully aware that if the forces of demand and supply

are allowed to determine the price of oil, we may very well be opening the floodgates to inflation. It is also clear however, that Government will not be in a position to subsidize the local price of fuel for an indefinite period of time. So, adjustments are inevitable if oil prices continue to rise.

Trinidad – a traditional source of oil

To meet the demands of our economy, Saint Lucia has traditionally sourced its oil supplies from the twin

island Republic of Trinidad and Tobago is, to some extent, dependent on foreign crude to supply its refineries. This means that private and foreign interests play a large part in determining the rate at which Trinidad and Tobago sells its oil on the World market.



Storage facilities are essential if the agreement between the governments of Venezuela and St. Lucia is to be successful



The continuing hike in world oil prices may force changes in driving habits

island Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. As a member of the Caribbean Community, and as an expression of regional solidarity, obtaining refined oil from a fellow CARICOM member-state was always a logical choice. In any event, Trinidad's oil is protected by the Caricom trading regime.

Today, as we attempt to cope with the spiraling cost of oil, it may seem

that Trinidad and Tobago is unable to provide us with any substantive form of relief for our oil woes. This is simply because the twin island republic sells its oil to us at world market prices. According to the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, Caricom cannot enjoy a preferential rate because of two basic but related factors. Firstly, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago does not possess 100 percent ownership of the industry. And secondly, Trinidad and

tribe initiative by Venezuela has opened for us a new door that represents a possible lifeline. I say it is a "possible lifeline" because there are hurdles in the way of implementing the initiative.

Before I itemize the hurdles and the challenges, let me explain the initiative.

PM Converses with the Nation

reach the US\$100 a barrel mark. Countries that are party to this agreement will be given a period of 17 years, including a two year grace period to pay for the oil supplied under the agreement, providing that the price per barrel remains below US\$40; should the price per barrel exceed US\$40, the payment

offer preferential rates. The products that Venezuela may purchase at preferential rates may include certain items such as sugar, bananas or other goods or services to be determined that are believed to be affected by the trade policies of rich countries.

Further, Venezuela proposes to contribute US\$50 million as part of a package, which will go into a facility called the Alba Caribe fund to kick-start the plan. And that is not all. The Venezu-

elation Government has also agreed to pay for the oil shipments and to help establish storage facilities in countries which are party to the agreement.

What is of greater significance is that under the agreement provisions have also been made for the deferment of payments. With regard to deferred payments, Venezuela shall determine the portion that shall be paid with goods and services for which it shall

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the new business which will be generated by this initiative must be between governments. The agreement specifically requires states to implement the energy-related operations. In order to enable the governments of the region to do so, the Venezuela Government will offer technical cooperation to support the creation of state agencies in countries not possessing qualified state institutions for this purpose. Such a stipulation will, if the Government

However, we must not allow ourselves to be lured into a false sense of security, even as we reflect on the scope and generosity of the Petrocaribe initiative.

Energy will remain a critical issue for us in the foreseeable future. We must use this window provided by this initiative to seriously begin looking at alternative and renewable sources of energy. The time to seek new alternatives is now, not tomorrow or the day after. That is why the Government is cooperating with LUCELEC to establish a wind farm close to Vieux Fort to generate electricity.

Hugo Chavez – champion of the poor

The Petrocaribe initiative is a bold venture on the part of Venezuelan President, Hugo Chavez. It has been a long time since this region has experienced such generosity. The Petrocaribe initiative is a brave initiative that would only be undertaken by no less a man than Hugo Chavez, a renowned champion of the poor. By undertaking this initiative, he is sure to cause alarm among international oil companies. However, it is a risk he is willing to take to stand in solidarity with the poor people of the world.

The challenges of implementing the agreement

Obviously, as we welcome this initiative, we need to study very carefully how best we can implement it.

To begin with, since the initiative is a bi-lateral agreement between the Governments of Saint Lucia and Venezuela, the Government is required to first establish a local company, to be jointly owned by the Government of Saint Lucia and Venezuela.

Implementation of the initiative will also be hampered by the fact that the Government of Saint Lucia does not own any storage facility or distribution outlets.

There is one area where I think the initiative can be of major and immediate benefit. It is in the provision of cheaper oil to LUCELEC. If LUCELEC is able to source cheaper oil from Venezuela under the agreement, then consumers will benefit immediately; so too would hotels and manufacturing entities. Cheaper oil will help to make our tourism and manufacturing more competitive. It will ease the cost of electricity for consumers too. I hope to engage the management of LUCELEC in the coming days on this issue.

A gateway to energy security

The Petrocaribe initiative is not only a possible gateway to greater energy security, but it will also open the door to new areas of cooperation between the Governments of Saint Lucia and Venezuela. The other areas identified so far for possible cooperation under this agreement are education, road construction, housing and the establishment of an asphalt plant for Saint Lucia.

If the Petrocaribe initiative becomes a reality, it will undoubtedly strengthen our ability to survive current global market trends in oil prices.

Let us see what happens. Take care now, and be of good cheer. Until next week, God bless.



LUCELEC must find alternative sources of energy soon



The government of Antigua and Barbuda announced a hike in the price of gas earlier this week

Continuing Education – The St. Lucian Context

Nearly 700 students register annually

What is Continuing Education?

Continuing education can be defined as an instructional program designed especially for part-time adult students, to bring them up to date in particular areas of knowledge or skills. According to International Continuing Education organizations, adult learners fall into the category of post high-school students or ages 16 plus. Continuing Education is offered by most Colleges and Universities, either through face-to-face learning or through distance learning modalities.

Continuing Education providers are dedicated to the belief that lifelong learning contributes to human fulfillment and positive social change. Lifelong learning enables adults to acquire the knowledge, skills, and values needed to lead productive and satisfying lives.

Continuing Education programmes at the Sir Arthur Lewis Community College are offered through the Department of Continuing Education (DOCE), which was established to address the lifelong learning needs of the general adult population.

Background and Mission of the DOCE

The Parliamentary Act No. 8 of 1985 that mandated the establishment of the Sir Arthur Lewis Community College (SALCC) outlines one of the College goals thus:

“to address the continuing learning needs of the general public so as to assist adults to broaden their knowledge, skills and attitudes through the provision of structured learning experiences.”

In order to fulfill this mandate of the St Lucia Government, the Board of

Governors of the College established the DOCE in 1988. Generally, the Department provides learning activities aimed at three broad categories of persons, namely those aspiring towards career enhancement and upward mobility in the workplace, persons requiring access to institutions of higher learning and individuals enrolling for purposes of leisure and enrichment.

The DOCE is committed to the principle that education is a lifelong process and that, in this rapidly changing world, adults must be provided with meaningful ways to adapt to the challenges facing them. The ‘Right to Learn’ is a universal right which should be respected without discrimination or limitations.

The Hamburg Declaration on Adult Education (1997), emphasizes that: ‘the informed and effective participation of women and men in every sphere of life is needed if humanity is to survive and to meet the challenges of the future’

The DOCE is a focal point of the college community and must be responsive to the needs of its clients - the wider community. Its mission therefore, is to provide good quality education and training which facilitate and stimulate positive attitudes to life-long learning. Thus, adult learners are able to access educational opportunities so as to enhance their personal development and career prospects.

The DOCE is responsible for the organization and coordination of part-time courses and programmes, workshops and seminars either through day release or evening sessions. The Department also seeks to promote collaboration with both the public and private sectors as well as with foreign agencies and institutions.



Main buildings of the SALCC are used to educate Saint Lucians who desire to continue their education

The Department is expected to be financially self-supporting and operates on a ‘break-even’ basis so tuition and administrative costs must be covered entirely by student fees.

Departmental Structure

The Department of Continuing Education has its main office at the SALCC campus on Morne Fortune. Its activities are supervised by Coordinator Mrs. Veronica Simon with the help of Assistant Coordinators, Mr. McCorville Combie and Mrs. Lesley Crane-Mitchell. The Southern Extension Centre (SEC), a subsidiary of the department, operates as an outreach centre in Vieux Fort and

was opened in 1993.

The SEC is located in Beanfield, Vieux Fort and serves communities in a wide geographical range from Choiseul to Dennery. It is supervised by Acting Assistant Coordinator, Mrs. Cleopha Dilsuk. Students at this Centre are able to enroll in both part-time evening and full-time day programmes.

The Western Extension Centre (WEC), was opened in 2001 in Palmiste Road, Soufriere, to serve the Canaries to Choiseul area. However, due to extremely low registration, the College was forced to close this Centre in 2004.

Continued in next week's issue



Hundreds of Saint Lucians graduate from the DOCE annually

\$2,500 reward policy yielding fruitful results

Police Recover 84 Illegal Weapons

Police officers are recovering illegal firearms at a faster rate than ever before, thanks mainly to the success of a policy of

offering a \$2,500 reward to persons who assist in their recovery. To date, the police have recovered 84 unlawful weapons, almost twice as many as

recovered seven weeks ago.

According to the latest official statistics, the police recovered 43 firearms between January 1 and June 21, 2005. However, another 41 were recovered in the seven-week period from June 22 to August 8 this year.

In most cases, the illegal firearms were recovered and the accused persons arrested, charged and convicted.

In some cases, the firearms were handed in, while in others they were recovered by the police acting on information received. In other cases, the illegal firearms were recovered after search warrants were presented and searches were made of identified premises. Still in other cases, the illegal firearms were found after tip-offs followed-up by the law officers.

The weapons recovered include 12-Gauge shotguns, 9mm and Magnum .357 pistols, .38 revolvers, .25 and .22 pistols and semi-automatic rifles, as well as a .22 rifle.

The police have been reporting

steady success since the reward mechanism was initiated last year by Prime Minister Dr Kenny D. Anthony.

Under this arrangement, persons with useful information contact the police and the money is paid only after the weapons have been successfully recovered.

The police have assured the public that the entire process of identification and recovery is conducted with absolute confidentiality and the new initiative has been yielding positive results since the reward policy was announced last year.

Earlier this year, Minister for Home Affairs and Internal Security, Senator Calixte George, acknowledged that the reward policy is netting in illegal firearms and ammunition at a faster pace than before the new policy was put into effect.

Police Commissioner Ausbert Regis has also confirmed that the policy is working satisfactorily.



An amazing assortment of illegal firearms retrieved by the police

The Integrity Commission and the Public Confidentiality and Secrecy

It is clear from the questions asked and comments made about the Integrity Commission by some politicians, and by members of the news media and general public that there are serious misconceptions about the requirements for confidentiality and secrecy in the Integrity in Public Life Act (No. 6 of 2004).

From time to time there are inquiries in the media about role of the Integrity Commission in relation to a current rumour or allegation of financial misconduct in one department of the public service or another. It is not uncommon to hear people expressing their desire to see the financial affairs of people in public life published in the newspapers, or disclosed in radio and TV interviews by members of the Commission.

The Act forbids the Commission to publicly disclose information contained in the declarations submitted by persons in public life. The overwhelming majority of members of parliament who discussed the provisions of the legislation agreed that the declarations filed with the Commission and the records of the Commission should be kept "secret and confidential and shall not be made public..." Heavy punishments await members of the Commission, or unauthorized persons who disclose details of declarations. An unauthorized person is one who obtains and publishes information which he or she is not legally entitled to receive.

The special exceptions to secrecy and confidentiality rule are: (a) when an order is given by a judge of the Supreme Court; (b) when the Commission assumes special powers to inquire into a declarant; (c) when the information is required in connection with the Exchange Control Ordinance (Cap. 180) or the Commissions of Inquiry Ordinance (Cap. 5), or in connection with court proceedings for perjury under the Criminal Code.



The Integrity Commission is housed in the Sir Stanislaus James Building on the Waterfront - Floor 1

Members of the public who are aware of the workings of the government service would know that certain financial information, for instance, salaries of civil servants, including parliamentarians and other high officials eligible to declare under the Integrity in Public Life Act, is already public information. Ordinary citizens can obtain this information, not in declarations to the Commission, but in the Estimates of Expenditure.

It's not unusual to hear people discussing the Commission ask, 'where is the Integrity Commission and what is it doing about so-and-so?' Some of these inquiries, and even some allegations about the conduct of certain people in public life, are made in the media, or on political platforms, but directed in a subtle manner at the Commission. Either out of ignorance of the law, or because of misinformation, most of the inquirers leave the impression that there are no lines of communication between the general public and the Commission. Their comments can

lead others to believe that the Commission can properly carry out its mandate without the cooperation of members of the public.

The first misconception that should be addressed is one that suggests that the duty of the Integrity Commission is somehow isolated from the public. As stated in Article No. 1 of this series, the Commission is a requirement of the St. Lucia Constitution to ensure financial accountability of leaders and officials in the public service. The Constitution prescribes certain checks and balances to deter conflicts that could invite public servants to serve interests, other than the interests of the general public.

It means, therefore, every member of the public has a duty to assist institutions like the Integrity Commission with the job of trying to ensure financial accountability of persons who make decisions in the public service. The Commission involves the public in its work by encouraging people to pass on any information they may have about violations of the Integrity in

Public Life Act. Among the functions, listed in Section 7 (c) of the Act, is one which states that the Commission shall "receive and investigate complaints regarding non-compliance with or breach of this Act..."

This public duty to help the Commission is re-enforced and explained in Section 32, which states: "Any person who has reasonable grounds to believe that a person in public life is (a) in breach of a provision of this Act; (b) has committed an act of corruption, may make a complaint in writing to the Commission." The key words here are "in writing". In other words, a member of the public who has information that can help the commission should write down the details of his/her concerns about the person or persons being complained about, and either deliver the written complaint by hand, or send it by registered post to the Chairman of the Commission.

But the Commission does not officially recognize rumours and allegations made in the media or on political platforms. The purpose of a complaint should always be to assist the Commission in ensuring that people in public life are accountable to the Constitution. Therefore, complaints must be made "in good faith" and in the honest belief that the allegations in the complaint are "substantially true".

To encourage people to make complaints that are in good faith the Act (at Sec. 33) provides for protection of a person making a complaint. A person making a complaint in good faith "shall not be liable to any form of reprisal or any suit whether civil or criminal." As stated earlier, complaints that are not made in good faith – untrue allegations made with malice – are not deserving of protection. But that is for the Commission to decide upon examination of the complaints. Complaints can either be accepted and investigated, or rejected by the Commission.

FOTO FACTS

TAKING THE OATH - Former principal Agatha Jn Panel being sworn in as Acting Minister for Education taking the oath of collective responsibility - In effect agreeing not to disclose contributions made and conclusions taken at Cabinet meetings.



Discovery at Marigot Bay Coming Soon

On the hillside of Marigot, overlooking the bay, Discovery at Marigot Bay, a 124 apartment hotel, is expected to be finished by February 2006. That's the assurance given to Minister for Tourism Honourable Phillip J Pierre who headed a tour to the facility Wednesday.

Work on the hotel is progressing at a feverish pace as the island tallies the room stock in the tourism sector, ahead of World Cup 2007.

Speaking at the end of the tour, Minister Pierre said besides the additional rooms he was extremely pleased for the jobs created by the hotel.

"I am pleased to know that as we speak there are 350 Saint Lucians employed in this hotel in the construction



Government ministers, technocrats and Discovery contractors and consultants tour the soon-to-be completed hotel facility



Discovery at Marigot Bay (L) nestled in the charming Marigot Inlet

stage. It is a learning process; they are learning skills they did not have before. What's even more pleasing is when the construction is completed, there is going to be 200 full-time jobs and these jobs are not only in the area of service."

Wednesday's visit to the Discovery at Marigot Bay is one of many to be undertaken by Ministry of Tourism officials to various hotel sites.

The Tourism Ministry is working with a strategic accommodation plan ahead of Cricket World Cup 2007, which proposes 22 hotel projects. Of that number 5 are earmarked for expansion and renovation and 17 projects are new.

Minister Pierre said the high level of activity and interest in St. Lucia for tourism investment is as a result of a determined formula.

"What we've provided is an environment with attractive incentives, political stability, a spirit of transparency and a Saint Lucian workforce and people who understand the benefits of investment. We have provided ideal conditions where an investor knows exactly what he can get from the government to fulfil his commitments."

Owner of Discovery at Marigot Bay, Mr John Verity said global tourism outlook is for vibrant tourism activity particularly in the Caribbean as travellers from the US and Europe favour the region.

Mr Verity and his family began a love affair with Marigot Bay some years ago, as guests at the then Hurricane Hole Hotel. He said he was happy to have made the investment when the opportunity presented itself.

A FIRE STATION FOR THE SOUTHERN BELT A BOOST FOR ALL ESSENTIAL SERVICES

The construction of the Vieux-Fort Fire Station is said to be a shining example of government's thrust to rectify the developmental imbalance that is obvious in most towns and villages



Former Chief Fire Officer (C) Augustin Gaspard heralding a turning point in the delivery of service provided by the Vieux-Fort Fire Station



The Government of Saint Lucia - Upgrading all essential services

across the island.

Prime Minister and Member of Parliament for Vieux-Fort South Hon. Dr. Kenny Anthony on Wednesday evening witnessed the official opening of the EC2.2 million dollar building.

"This station is unique in that it will serve as a southern divisional headquarters of the St. Lucia Fire Service. It is intended to specifically serve the communities of Choiseul, Laborie and Vieux-Fort. It is for this reason that it is placed in this strategic location and with the new Vieux-Fort to Soufriere Highway it is within the reach of every community within the southern belt," the prime minister said.

Dr. Anthony said gone are the days when communities had to contend with a lack of essential services. As a result government, he said, is executing a major policy to introduce essential services where needed and boost existing operations to ensure adequate functioning.

Minister for Home Affairs and Internal Security Senator Hon. Calixte George said government expects to address deficiencies in resources in all police and fire stations in the near future.

Designed to accommodate 18 fire units, the Vieux-Fort Fire Station will be staffed by 35 fire service personnel.



THIS WEEK ON NTN

Sat. Aug. 13th - Fri. August 19th, 2005

Women West Indies - Portrait of Her Excellency Governor General Dame Pearlette Louisy - Sat. Aug. 13th 11:30 a.m.

· St. Lucia National Dress Festival 2005 - Sun. Aug. 14th, 11:30 a.m.

· The GIS speaks with St. Lucians who interfaced with Marcus Garvey - Mon. August 15th, 8:00 p.m.

· Methods of Contraception: Abstinence as a method of contraception - Tues. August 16th, 8:00 p.m.

· Venezuela: A 21st Century Revolution - Wed. August 17th, 8:00 p.m.

· The GIS discusses the establishment of the Empress Menen Foundation in St. Lucia - Thurs. August 18th, 8:00 p.m.

· Myths and Realities of Natural Disasters - August 19th, 8:00 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.

www.stlucia.gov.lc

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