



ST. LUCIA CONSULATE OPENS IN MARTINIQUE

St Lucia has moved to strengthen historic close relations with neighbouring Martinique through the opening of a full-time consulate in Fort-de-France on Friday, February 7.

Prime Minister, Dr. Kenny D. Anthony, Minister of External Affairs, Senator Julian R. Hunte, and Minister of Agriculture, Senator Calixte George, travelled to the Martiniquan capital to formally open the consulate.

"The benefits of having a consulate here is to afford St Lucians living in Martinique an opportunity to ensure that if anything happens to them, they can come to the Consulate," Hunte told over 200 guests at the opening ceremony.

"The relationship that St. Lucia has with Martinique is the closest relationship that St. Lucia has with any country in the Caribbean." Dr. Kenny Anthony .

"Where legal advice is required, that advice can be obtained," he added. "Where the assistance of the Ministry of External Affairs is required, that assistance can also be given."

The Consulate will offer passport services and will be particularly useful in helping Martinique-based St Lucians to resolve issues related to their legal status as well as that of children born on the French island.

Hunte, however, expressed concern about "undue criminal activity" involving St Lucians that could jeopardize relations between the two islands, and adversely affect, in particular, law-abiding St Lucians doing legitimate business in Martinique.

"The Consulate here is very positive," Hunte said. "It is welcomed by the Government of France as a step in the right direction and we can only build from here doing work as it relates providing passports and so on, but hopefully to build trade and investment between Martinique and St Lucia."

cont'd on page 3



Conseil General (Martinique) President Claude Lise, Mdme. Christiane Laurent Dussiel, Consul General (St. Lucia) and Prime Minister Dr. Kenny D. Anthony arrive for the formal ceremony.



Prime Minister Dr. Kenny Anthony and French Ambassador Henri Vidal exchange documents after signing the loan agreement

The governments of St. Lucia and France have signed a 10 million Euro loan agreement for the improvement of several roads in the rural areas. On the lengthy list of beneficiary communities are Fond Assau, Etangs, Delcer, La Pointe, Durrand, Mahaut, Genneau, Rodney Bay main road, Millet, and Monchy.

EDITORIAL

GOOD GOVERNMENT

When the incumbent Labour administration took office in 1997, it promised to introduce a new style of governance to St Lucia. A style of governance in which transparency and accountability would be the defining hallmarks.

The clearest demonstration of this commitment is the Integrity in Public Life Act, a landmark piece of legislation which took effect last year. It subjects holders of public office in St Lucia, for the first time, to rigorous scrutiny by establishing a strict code of conduct and ensuring there is accountability.

The lengthy list includes Members of the Senate and House of Assembly, Ministers of Government, Parliamentary Secretaries, Chief Technical Officers in Government Ministries and Heads of Department, Permanent Secretaries, Deputy Permanent Secretaries, Commissioner of Police, Head of Prisons, heads of statutory corporations, among others.

The ultimate aim of the legislation, which establishes an independent Integrity Commission as the main enforcing authority, is to give St Lucia clean government by establishing systems to identify and punish corruption.

Among its provisions, public officials are required to file an annual declaration of their income, assets and liabilities with the Integrity Commission for examination. Public officials are also required to declare any gift valued at more than \$500.

Charges of corruption against public officials are fairly commonplace in the Caribbean. Sometimes they are based on credible evidence. Often, however, the alleged corruption is simply rumour designed to smear reputations and push hidden agendas.

Thanks to the Act, anyone who has reasonable grounds to believe that a public officer has committed an act of corruption can make a written complaint to the Integrity Commission.

Every St Lucian interested in public affairs, must make it their business to peruse the Act.



"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



ANTI-CRIME STRATEGY GETS THUMBS-UP

Top marks for the innovative approach St Lucia is adopting to combatting crime.

Professor Ramesh Deosaran, director of the Trinidad-based Centre for Criminology and Criminal Justice of the University of the West Indies (UWI), says St Lucia's approach to crime-fighting is "unprecedented" in the Caribbean.

"I have been to many states in the Caribbean trying to deal with this same problem but it is, in my professional view, an unprecedented example that has flowed from the imagination of the Attorney-General and his Government," Deosaran says.

The observations of the UWI St Augustine-based crime expert were made at the official launch of the National Crime Commission on Thursday, January 30.

Dr. Deosaran is serving as an advisor to the Commission which will play a critical role in effecting Government's crime strategy. The other major elements are a community policing initiative which is to be expanded islandwide, and a recently-done national crime survey which has yielded critical data for effective decision-making.



Commission CEO Linwall James

"... In triangulating the three instruments of community policing, the National Crime Commission and the work which has been uncovered by the survey on public safety and the fear of crime, we are into a new era," Dr. Deosaran says.

Police accountability, which too was



Consultant Dr. Ramesh Deosaran

"With the scientific approach this Government intends to take with respect to such matters as crime prevention and crime detection rates, we would now expect the relevant agencies to set specific benchmarks through which their performance can be effectively measured," he says.

According to Professor Deosaran, a burning question which the Royal St Lucia Police Force needs to answer is why 70 per cent of the public, as revealed by the recent survey, is dissatisfied with their performance.



Attorney General Petrus Compton

This notwithstanding, the survey showed that 80 per cent of St Lucians is willing to cooperate with the police. When asked if they had been provided with an opportunity to do so through community policing, 97 per cent responded no.

The solution, says Dr Deosaran, is putting the community policing programme, which has worked wonders in the Marchand community where it was pioneered, "on faster wheels and with faster reaches".

Some of the major elements are community policing initiatives to be expanded islandwide, and a recently-done national crime survey which has yielded critical data for effective decision-making.

According to the professor, crime is a worldwide problem with particular serious implications for the Caribbean. Taking this into account, he says "it cannot be business as usual".

Instead of leaving the job of fighting crime exclusively to the police, as was traditionally the case, he says it's time that other institutions and citizens in general are effectively roped into the national effort.

That's exactly what the Government's crime strategy is out to do. It is seeking to build effective partnerships between law enforcement and the citizenry, as well as provide a scientific basis for policing which was previously lacking.

Government and Citizens Collaboration

"If this St Lucia level of integrated community policing is successful and we certainly have no reason to doubt it will be, we will be doing the region a great favour by demonstrating how crime prevention can be effectively attained when the police force, the citizens and the government work towards a common cause," says Prime Minister, Dr. Kenny D. Anthony.

previously lacking in St Lucia, is an imperative under the new crime strategy.

"We are not alone," the professor observes. "All around the world, in the Home Office in the United Kingdom, there is at present tension between the Home Office Ministers and the different chiefs of police. about getting them to accept a new method, especially the one which has accountability."

Accountability of the Police

"In whatever part of the world where the police have been effective, the role of accountability has made a significant contribution," says Prime Minister Anthony. "When the rate of serious crime was significantly reduced in New York, one of the major reasons was the demand for accountability by (the) police chief ...from his several commanders..."

Dr. Anthony is requiring the same of the local police. As a matter of fact, he wants to see a significant improvement in the level of public satisfaction with the police performance by the time the next survey is done.



Government officials and consultant Dr. Deosaran at the head table during the launch of the National Crime Commission.

SEARCH ON FOR POLICE CHIEF

Government has launched a recruitment drive for a new Commissioner of Police to succeed outgoing chief, Brian Bernard.

The requirements are: a degree and postgraduate diploma in management or public administration, or/and any other related field of study; a senior command officers course; and at least 10 years of experience, including five at the rank of Superintendent or above.

Applications must be forwarded to the Secretary of the Public Service Commission, Waterfront, Castries, no later than March 31, 2003.

ST. LUCIA CONSULATE

from page 1

"When I reflect on the relationship between St. Lucia and Martinique," Prime Minister Anthony remarked, "I sometimes think that we have known each other for so long but somehow we have never acknowledged it."

"Today, for us, it is like a consummation," he added, "an acknowledgement of a relationship that has always been there and that is why, for us, it is a very, very special relationship."

Walking with Pride

Dr. Anthony also addressed the issue of crime involving some St Lucians visiting Martinique. It was without doubt "the worst enemy" of current efforts to build relations with Martinique, he said.

"I want every St Lucian to walk in the streets of Fort-de-France, in every community in Martinique, with honour, with pride and with dignity. I do not want my people in shame, in embarrassment, with bowed heads," Dr Anthony said.

He announced that Martiniquan and St Lucian authorities have agreed to establish a joint committee to tackle crime and other bilateral security issues. Without going into details, he said security cooperation between the two islands was "sound" and "solid" and had reaped "great success" over the last few months.

Such cooperation is expected to be intensified within the framework of the joint security committee.

Dr Anthony noted that St Lucia is the only Caribbean country for which France had waived the requirement for entry visas to Martinique.

Unlocking Doors

"For the sake of St Lucia and the Caribbean people, we have to make it work," he said. "We have to invest in its success because, in a sense, our history, our relationship has given us the opportunity to unlock the doors between Martinique and the rest of the Caribbean."

"The relationship that St Lucia has with Martinique is the closest relationship that St Lucia has with any country in the Caribbean," Dr. Anthony added. "We are closer to you than we are to all of our other immediate neighbours."

"That is the degree of importance that we attach to this relationship. We shall be jealous guardians of this special relationship between St Lucia and Martinique."

The opening of the diplomatic mission preceded another significant event in St. Lucia's strong relationship with France: the signing of an important loan agreement for improving several vital roads in the countryside. On Monday, February 10, Dr. Anthony and French ambassador, Henri Vidal, signed the 10 million Euro loan to finance the Tertiary Roads Development Project which is expected to give a major boost to eco-tourism in the St Lucian countryside.

Assistance for road project

Dr. Anthony said France's financial support for the tertiary roads project through the Agence Française de Développement had particular significance. "We are getting finance to develop roads in St Lucia that we have not been able to convince other agencies to develop," he noted

"The rate of interest is just 3.5 per cent. The repayment period is 20 years, including seven year of grace for the repayment of the principal," the Prime Minister told the signing ceremony. "The Government could not ask for more in these difficult and turbulent times. Nowhere can one get such generous conditions."

This latest loan, approved in the record time of one year, brings total French development support to St Lucia over the last 10 years to more than EC\$125 million.



Sen. Julian R. Hunte
Minister for External Affairs

Besides boosting the island's eco-tourism potential, Dr Anthony said the loan "will bring great pleasure and satisfaction to hitherto remote communities that have been out of the reach of Government for the very simple reason that, given the difficulties we have had ... to mobilize the sort of financial support to take care of the needs in those particularly communities."

The road project will literally touch almost every nook and cranny of the island. On the lengthy list of beneficiary communities are Fond Assau, Chassin, Etangs, Delcer, La Pointe, Durrand, Mahaut, Genneau, Rodney Bay main road, Millet, and Monchy.

Martiniquan and St Lucian authorities have agreed to establish a joint committee to tackle crime and other bilateral security issues. Without going into details, he said security cooperation between the two islands was "sound" and "solid" and had reaped "great success" over the last few months.



Prime Minister Kenny Anthony addressing St. Lucians and French officials in Martinique

DON'T SELL COUNTRY SHORT!

As St. Lucians prepare to celebrate 24th independence anniversary, Hon. Phillip J. Pierre reinforces national pride.

"Don't let anybody make you sell your country short! Don't let anybody make you believe that your country is worse than anywhere in the world! Don't let anybody make you lose your pride and your dignity for your country!"

Minister for Commerce, Tourism, Investment and Consumer Affairs, Phillip J. Pierre, is emphasizing this patriotic theme as St Lucia prepares to mark its 24th anniversary of Independence next Saturday, February 22.

Pierre, is putting forward a tried and tested formula for St Lucia to achieve more success. "You must walk high," he is urging St Lucians. "You must feel proud. You must work together. You must be decisive. You must plan your life. You must be made of integrity and discipline."

Independence anniversaries around the world serve as an opportune time for



Hon. Phillip J. Pierre: a call to patriotism.

nations to reflect collectively on where they have come from, the achievements which have propelled them to where they are today, and to strategize as to where they wish to go in the future.

Despite many ups and downs, St Lucia has passed the crucial test of resilience and endurance and the country today, by most development standards, is generally better off today than 24 years ago. Further, St Lucia has fared better than many countries, including a few in the Caribbean, which have actually regressed since Independence.

Yet, St Lucian successes are often overlooked in mainstream public debate where the emphasis, in recent years, has shifted more on playing up the negative rather than presenting a balanced picture of the island's progress. It's an unwholesome trend many fear can cause St Lucians to lose confidence in themselves and impede future progress.

Take the performance of the economy. Pierre says some persons would have St Lucians believe "that all over the world things are good but only in St Lucia things are bad." Yet when St Lucia is compared with other countries, there's solid evidence that St Lucia is reaping many successes and experiencing challenges which other countries are also facing.

Last year, for example, two million jobs were lost in the United States, the dynamo of the world economy. And, in another sign that more economic challenges lie ahead for America, the stock market hit a record low recently.

In contrast, St Lucia's economy has been rebounding steadily following the beating it took after the September 11, 2001 tragedy in the United States. The clearest indicator is the performance of tourism, which was hardest hit post September 11.

cont'd on page 7

THE BIG RUSH TO S

Government paves the way for over 3000 young

Everyone possesses a particular talent which can be developed, either as a hobby or as a career, to give meaning and purpose to their lives. The challenge always is finding out what that special talent is.

Some people are naturally gifted as artistes, while others have the natural ability to develop into top-class artisans.

Some make the discovery rather easily. For the majority, however, it's often impossible without some sort of expert guidance.

"Every person can achieve but they must have the drive to achieve," says General Manager, Noorani Azeez, "We are here to assist but you must have the drive inside you. You must get up, find yourself here, and we will help you with the rest."

In operation for just two years, NSDC has already placed several hundred St. Lucians on the road to success. Up to a week ago, some 3,000 persons had registered to benefit from various types of career guidance and skills training. And, by June of this year, 700 of them will complete their courses and be ready for the job market.

special service for job seekers, including use of a well-stocked Resource Centre with literature on a wide range of careers.

Targeting recent school and college graduates, among others, the service includes workshops showing how to market oneself to prospective employers, how to write effective resumes and cover letters, how to analyse the job market to spot opportunities, and how to maintain a competitive edge, among other things.

At these workshops, job seekers are also given an introduction to important concepts

and taught key skills necessary for success in the contemporary workplace. Among them, how to boost self-esteem, team building, department, effective communication, work ethics and customer service.

"Skills training is a very dynamic field. It is changing so fast that we have to get a gauge every year from employers in the public and private sectors," says Azeez, who has been general manager for almost a year.

"We do this through a training needs survey in which we seek to find out what areas are opening up, what areas are contracting, and then we try to focus our limited resources on training in these areas to meet those needs."

Every Thursday morning, at its Bisee headquarters and occasionally at other venues, NSDC holds an orientation for prospective trainees on general job market issues and to introduce its various services. In cases where persons are not sure what they want to do, or they have an idea but are not too clear on how to proceed, career counsellors are on hand to provide guidance and encouragement.

Demand for Information Technology

Once these issues are resolved, it's a simple case of signing up for the programme in which the trainee has interest, and awaiting a call on when to show up for the start of classes.

"Information technology – IT— is one of the hottest areas right now," says Azeez. "In fact, what we have moved to do is to incorporate exposure to IT as a compulsory component of every technical vocational area.



The headquarters of the National Skills Development Centre (NSDC) located at Bisee in Castries.

For St. Lucians facing such a challenge, especially if they are unemployed and seeking to unlock hidden potential to build a career, there's fortunately a government organisation waiting to help. It's the National Skills Development Centre Inc. (NSDC).

Located at the Bisee Industrial Park just outside Castries, NSDC is another initiative by the Kenny Anthony administration to put unemployed St. Lucians to work. It's also intended to assist persons looking to change careers.

Collaboration with BNTF

Set up as a company owned by the Ministry of Education, Human Resource Development, Youth and Sport, NSDC is investing roughly \$2 million a year in developing St. Lucia's most important resource – its people.

The money comes mainly from Government and the European Union (EU). Lately, some financing has also come from the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) through the Basic Needs Trust Fund (BNTF) and will be used to train some 200 persons in the north and south of the island.

The minute a prospective trainee walks into the NSDC's head office, an eye-catching slogan in the reception area reminds them of the real purpose for coming there. "Today's preparation," it declares, "determines tomorrow's achievement." And, as if to reinforce that message, NSDC's slogan which is also prominently displayed, urges each prospective trainee to "Explore your potential".

NSDC has been working closely with the public sector and business in pursuing its mission of supporting national economic development by expanding the pool of skilled persons in demand on the job market. Under the chairmanship of Permanent Secretary in the Division of Youth and Sports, Henry Mangal, NSDC's Board of Directors is largely made up of private sector representatives.

Being Competitive

At present, training activities focus on the following areas: construction, craft, agriculture, sewing and fashion design, furniture making, business/entrepreneurial skills, information technology, and hospitality. Additionally, NSDC offers a

NSDC is investing roughly \$2 million a year in developing St. Lucia's most important resource – its people.



Books on careers in the well-stocked Resource Centre.

SHARPEN SKILLS

Persons to obtain marketable skills.

He adds: "Regardless of which technical vocational area you are coming here to get trained in, be it housekeeping, bartending, plumbing, electrical installation, sewing, office procedures or front desk reception, you have to be exposed for a number of hours to information technology."

As an alternative to pursuing mainstream employment, many graduates are opting for self-employment through setting up their own small business. In response, NSDC is seeking to partner with agencies like the James Belgrave Micro-Enterprise Development Fund (BELFUND) and the Small Enterprise Development Unit (SEDU); to facilitate graduates who are so inclined.

Satellite Centres

NSDC has set a number of goals over the next three years to cope with the strong demand for its services. Among them, expanding the programme and having its satellite centres fully up and running so as to decentralise operations and open up more training opportunities for persons living in rural communities. There are satellite centres in Choiseul, Marc, Vieux Fort, Patience and Anse-la-Raye.

For Azeez and his 30-odd staff, the ultimate satisfaction comes from seeing persons using the opportunities Government is providing, to achieve goals that make a difference in their lives. Azeez took pride in relating a couple success stories to **Nationwide**.

Take the case of a farmer who quit growing bananas a few years ago because he was discouraged by the many ups and downs the industry has gone through in recent years. He turned to NSDC in the hope of making a fresh start, was pointed in a particular direction, and today is gainfully employed in a new field after discovering a special talent he never realised he had.

"We have other stories that will move you to tears," says Azeez. "There are persons who have come here with horrible domestic experiences of abuse. Today, these people are employed, self-sufficient, are out of the unfortunate situation, and have found something to live for."



General Manager Noorani Azeez

"It has done so much for the self-esteem of these persons," he says.

Perhaps, you're in a situation where NSDC can also make a difference in your life. Why not contact them about exploring your potential? You could very well be unlocking the door to a better and brighter future!



Trainees exploring the wonders of the new information and communications technology

Upon completing a course, trainees are required to participate in a compulsory 160-hour job attachment with a designated business enterprise before graduation.

"The other area that we like to stress on and is compulsory is productivity enhancement training. This involves about 10 to 12 different workshops in soft skills enhancement, from customer service to your responsibilities as a citizen of St Lucia."

A typical course lasts between six and eight months. Trainees are required to participate in a compulsory 160-hour job attachment with a designated business enterprise before graduation. The idea is to give them a feel of the real work environment. "I am very pleased that a number of private sector houses are involved. I applaud their efforts, they understand that we are doing this to assist them, but we would like to invite more companies to participate," says Azeez.

"To date, over 100 persons have completed the attachment programme and our goal is to reach 500 before April. Approximately 20 to 25 per cent of those persons have been retained full time by the business houses and we are also very happy about that," he adds.

Government is providing opportunities for people to achieve goals that make a difference in their lives.



An orientation session in progress at the NSDC.

A WINDFALL OF BENEFITS!

Over 100 high quality new jobs for St Lucians, improved cellular phone service island-wide, reduced prices for some products and services, property rentals and other types of new business for local businesses, and millions of dollars in new revenue for Government.

Yes! St Lucia is reaping a windfall of benefits, with the prospect of more to come, as the process of liberalizing the lucrative telecommunications market edges towards an historic milestone in

"We promised you jobs, we promised you better service, we promised you investment in infrastructure, we promised you cheaper service and today we can tell you we have delivered," Finisterre is telling St Lucians.

"We have a clear vision of where we want to go," he says.

It wasn't a smooth ride to this historic milestone for the Kenny Anthony administration. Some doubting Thomases had suggested to the population that there was no way St Lucia could take on Cable

TELCOMMUNICATIONS LIBERALIZATION DELIVERS

Most Dramatic Impact on Cellular Phone Market



Cable & Wireless: facing competition for the first time.

another month or so. After enjoying monopoly status for 100 years, Cable & Wireless is facing some competition for the first time in St Lucia, beginning in the fast-growing mobile market.

After much public sparring between Cable & Wireless and new cellular service provider, Digicel, during negotiations for an interconnection agreement, the clinching of a deal following the intervention of Prime Minister Dr. Kenny Anthony has removed the last real obstacle to liberalization. AT&T Wireless, which kept a relatively low profile as Cable & Wireless and Digicel were fighting it out, is also getting ready to enter the market.

After all the skepticism and controversy that initially surrounded the Kenny Anthony administration's decision to spearhead the campaign for telecommunications liberalization in the OECS region, Communications, Works, Transport and Public Utilities Minister, Felix Finisterre, is naturally elated with how things have worked out. Especially from the standpoint of the consumer and overall benefits for the economy.

& Wireless and win. Despite the howls of criticism, Government pressed on, convinced it was doing the right thing for St Lucia and the OECS region as a whole. And, true to the old saying, perseverance seldom fails.

Now that the major hurdles in the liberalization process have been cleared, Finisterre is giving a timely piece of advice to St Lucians about coping with the new telecoms environment. Take some time to get to know the new legal framework governing the industry!

ECTEL and Regulation

After all the misinformation which fuelled recent public debate on the controversial interconnection issue, the minister for telecoms says it's vitally important that St Lucians understand the process, especially the Government's role and that of the regulatory bodies, namely the NTRC and ECTEL.

Most importantly, he wants St Lucians to appreciate that Government cannot just step in, as some persons had claimed, and



AT&T's Caribbean home: the JQ Charles Building on Bridge Street.

tell the various players what to do. It has to allow the process to work and, above all, it must uphold and respect the law. Otherwise, it too could end up in trouble, as happened to one regional government.

Increase in Cellular Telephones

"You as St Lucians must educate yourselves in terms of what the processes are in this whole liberalization process," he says. "You must understand what is happening."

Liberalization so far has had the most dramatic impact on the cellular phone market. There has literally been an explosion of growth in a matter of months. Not only has the price of calls come down, cell phones which Cable & Wireless was retailing a year ago for over \$200, have fallen to as low as \$35.

In fact, estimates are that the number of cellular users has more than doubled in the last year as a result of more aggressive marketing by Cable & Wireless in anticipation of competition.

With Digicel and AT&T on the verge of starting up service, Finisterre believes an even more interesting period lies ahead for cellular users with the prospect of even more exciting benefits.

Seeing that Cable & Wireless recently flooded the market with cell phones, he says it's quite possible the new entrants may decide to give theirs away to attract customers, as has happened in other countries. AT&T and Digicel are promising more technologically state-of-the-art cell phones and believe this will help give them an edge over Cable & Wireless.

Connecting to Rural Areas

The benefits do not stop there. Cellular service has improved in the last year as a result of new investments in infrastructure. You can now make a call from almost anywhere in St Lucia which wasn't possible up to a year ago. Cable & Wireless has put down a number of new cell sites connecting places like Anse-la-Raye for the first time while the new competitors were also busy erecting theirs. These towers are now a common sight all over the island.

LIBERALIZATION

from page 6.

“Those red towers you see going up all over St Lucia, each has a local value added of US\$100,000 in terms of jobs for small contractors, for suppliers and so on,” says Finisterre. “And there are over 50 of these being built by the three companies all over St Lucia.”

In recent times, Cable & Wireless spent an estimated US\$6.6 million on upgrading its infrastructure. AT&T and Digicel, on the other hand, have together spent an estimated US\$10.6 million to put their systems in place.

If you passed along Bridge Street recently in the heart of Castries, you would have

for competition. Some activities which were previously performed only by Cable & Wireless personnel – for example, the wiring of homes – have now been outsourced to private contractors

As a result, some former Cable & Wireless employees have seized the opportunity to go into the business of wiring homes. According to Finisterre, they have set up two new companies: UNITEL, operating in the Castries area, and OUTEL, serving Vieux Fort and the south.

The retail of telephone equipment is another business opportunity arising from telecommunications liberalization. Before,



Red and white cell towers: a common sight around St Lucia today.

noticed that the drab JQ Charles building is getting a major facelift. It's another visible example of how telecommunications liberalization is benefiting the St Lucian economy. AT&T has chosen the top floor of this well-known city landmark to house its corporate headquarters for the Eastern Caribbean.

Income Generation

Other St Lucian property owners too are benefitting from rental income. Accommodation had to be found for executives of the new companies who have come here to work. If you add the purchase of motor vehicles and other local services, you see even more money going into the economy.

Telecommunications liberalization has also meant additional job opportunities. Between AT&T and Digicel, their entry into market has directly created more than 100 “top quality, good jobs” for St Lucians, says Finisterre. As a result, total employment in the telecoms sector has climbed over the 500 mark. Cable & Wireless too has contributed to new job creation as a result of actions it has had to take in preparation

Cable & Wireless was legally the only entity which could offer telephone equipment for sale in St Lucia. Not so anymore!

“What is going to happen as a result,” says Finisterre, “is that a number of small entrepreneurs will now enter the market and begin to retail telephones to you the customer and therefore create more jobs for themselves and open up that market.”

Revenue for Government

Telecommunications liberalization means big bucks for Government – an estimated EC\$5.8 million in the first year alone. It's welcome revenue that will be used to help improve education, health care and provide other public goods and services which are increasingly in demand to improve the quality of life. Application fees were expected to have netted EC\$90,000 in revenue during the first year of liberalization.

License fees were expected to yield EC\$3.5 million and spectrum fees \$1.2 million. Some of this revenue is shared with the regulators.

And there's more good news. Additional revenue is soon coming through a proposed submarine cable. It will stretch from Puerto Rico to Venezuela and will pass through St Lucia.

NATIONAL PRIDE

from page 3

Not only have hotels which were closed reopened but visitor arrivals were up last year by 1.3 per cent over 2001, “the only country in the region to have kind of increase”, notes Pierre. There was a total of 253,000 stay-over visitors in 2002.

“That has happened because of strategic marketing,” says Pierre. “We had to shift the paradigm because Americans were afraid of travelling because of what happened on 9/11. So we decided we would shift the emphasis to Canada. The Prime Minister in October led a delegation to Canada and we went back again last month.”

“...The figures for November doubled from Canada and for the end of the year, there were increases of five per cent from Canada. By these marketing initiatives, we are trying to revive the tourism economy,” Pierre explains.

He says manufacturing is another sector St Lucians were led to believe was dead. Yet output last year was up by a whopping 12.5 per cent. And there's the case too of bananas about which so many negative things were also said. Yet St Lucia today is outperforming the other Windward Islands.

Take production levels for week one of 2003 as an example. St Lucia's output of 799

tonnes valued at £1.7 million, contrasts with 257 tonnes for Dominica and 488.4 tonnes for St Vincent and the Grenadines. For week 4, St Lucia's output was 719 tonnes, compared with 208 tonnes for Dominica and 386 tonnes for St Vincent and the Grenadines.

“Whilst we are doing that, we are diversifying the agricultural economy,” says Pierre. “Right now, over 700 farmers have gone back into bananas because of the work of the Ministry of Agriculture. When we started, they told you we didn't know what we were doing.”

Pierre says crime, whilst a serious matter of national concern, is another issue which has been misrepresented. He says rising crime is worldwide problem and the situation in St Lucia has to be viewed in the context of what is happening in the world because it has an influence on St Lucia.

He says while the incumbent administration has channelled considerable resources over the last six years into equipping the Royal St Lucia Police Force to meet the challenges of crime, more than any previous government, it would be unrealistic to expect dramatic results will be achieved overnight.

“April is six years that we have won this government,” Pierre says. “We have done a lot in our six years.”



The 24th anniversary of St. Lucia's independence will be observed on Saturday, February 22nd, 2003. The youth rally has been a standard feature of the anniversary activities. It provides young people with the opportunity to participate in a public display of national pride.

BUSY SCHEDULE FOR BEAUSEJOUR

Less than a year after making its debut as the Caribbean's newest and finest venue for international cricket, St Lucia is giving the world a unique gift which adds an exciting new dimension to the so-called 'game of glorious uncertainties'.

It's the first-ever Double Wicket World Cup, to be played April 4-6 at the Beausejour Cricket Ground in Gros Islet. Eight of the world's top cricketing nations — West Indies, England, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka — are expected to send two of their stars to participate.

DOUBLE WICKET TOURNAMENT, ONE-DAY INTERNATIONALS AND TEST MATCHES

Everton Weekes, were in St Lucia on Tuesday, February 4, for the official launch of the tournament offering a total prize purse of US\$175,000 and the Sir Garfield Sobers Trophy. St Lucia will be the venue for the event for the next 10 years.

The Double Wicket Tournament is one of a series of high-profile matches that will ensure the Beausejour Cricket Ground remains a hive of activity over the next year and helps to pull cricket fans to the island by the thousands.

The St Lucia Tourist Board is looking to sell television rights for the event which will earn St Lucia some additional revenue.

Following the Double Wicket tournament, Australia will take on the West Indies in a one-day international in May. Then, in June, Beausejour will have its first test match when Sri Lanka comes up against West Indies during their tour of the region.

The test match is a significant milestone for Beausejour.



Hon. Mario F. Michel Minister of Education, Human Resource Development, Youth and Sport

"This, thanks to the quality of the facility, its ideal location and the support structures we have put in place with a coalition arrangement right now between the Ministry of Sports, the St Lucia Tourist Board and the National Cricket Association to ensure that we can have the level of organization to make St Lucia one of the most attractive venues in the world,"

the quality that Beausejour brings to international cricket, that Michel says a representative suggested during a recent visit, that St Lucia is ideally suited to host the final of the 2007 World Cup, expected to be played in the West Indies.

Other fixtures on the Beausejour calendar for the next year are back-to-back one-day internationals against England in April 2004, to be followed two months later in June by the venue's second test match in which Bangladesh will come up against West Indies.

Michel says the benefits Beausejour is bringing to St Lucia justify the Kenny Anthony administration's decision to build the \$38 million facility, despite considerable opposition to the project.

Says Michel: "You will remember the chorus of criticism that I was subjected to and the rest of the Government but we persevered. We knew we were doing the right thing for the right reason in the right way and we made the decision."

"Today, a blind man even can see the merits of the decision made by this Government," he adds.

www.stlucia.gov.lc



Beausejour during the inaugural matches against New Zealand last year.

This latest addition to the international cricket calendar, coming just months after the World Cup, was conceptualized right here in St Lucia. It's part of the Kenny Anthony Government's strategy to link sport and tourism to bring significant economic benefits to the island.

"Imagine not just the international cricket stars like Ganguly, Jonty Rhodes, Wasim Akram and all those expected in St Lucia for the tournament, but the hundreds of sports journalists who will follow them and the hundreds of tourists from cricket-playing countries all around the world who will be in St Lucia in April to fill up our hotels during the off-season of the tourist industry," says Sports Minister, Mario Michel.

Several West Indies greats, including the legendary Sir Garfield Sobers and Sir

According to Cricket Online News, double wicket is an exciting form of cricket that provides the ultimate stage for the game's most flamboyant and entertaining cricket characters. It involves teams of two players who must both bat and bowl with each innings lasting eight overs.

Toursim Potential

When a player loses a wicket, 10 runs are deducted from the batting teams total and the player remains at the crease. All fielding duties will be carried out by international guest fielders. This format encourages risk taking in abundance with big hitting play alongside regular falling wickets, providing spectators with fantastic entertainment as they see a result from each match nearly every hour.

"It took Grenada four years to achieve test status, it took Antigua even more, it took other countries longer than that but St Lucia would have achieved test status in a record time of just one year from the establishment of our cricket ground," says Michel.

"This, thanks to the quality of the facility, its ideal location and the support structures we have put in place with a coalition arrangement right now between the Ministry of Sports, the St Lucia Tourist Board and the National Cricket Association to ensure that we can have the level of organization to make St Lucia one of the most attractive venues in the world," Michel adds.

In fact, the West Indies Cricket Board (WICB) apparently is so impressed with

Saint Lucia NATIONWIDE is published every fortnight by the Department of Information Services.

Contact us at: The Department of Information Services, Grahame Louisy Administrative Building, The Waterfront, Castries, St. Lucia, West Indies
Tel: (758) 468 2116; Fax (758) 453 1614; E-mail: gis@candw.lc; <http://stlucia.gov.lc>