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# RESPONSE TO OIL PRICE INCREASES

Statement by Honourable Dr. Kenny D. Anthony Prime Minister and Minister of Finance

**T**onight, I am not the bearer of glad tidings. I am here to announce and explain the adjustments in fuel prices, which have now become necessary in the context of the St. Lucian economy.

From your television channels of choice, you would have noticed that increasing petroleum prices have been generating significant interest and anxiety globally during the last sixteen months. Increasing petroleum demand from the United States and the developed Asian economies (India and China) combined with supply concerns in Saudi Arabia and Iran has placed tremendous upward pressure on prices. Analysts are fearful that an increase in oil prices beyond US\$ 70.00 per barrel would compromise the recovery in the world economy. This Government, mindful of the likely consequences of an increase in petroleum prices has managed to keep prices fixed for over a year, despite the turbulence in the international petroleum market.

A few weeks ago, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) indicated that real GDP Growth for St. Lucia in the year 2004 stood at 4.0 per cent. Real GDP growth for 2005 is forecasted at around 5 per cent. The realization of 4 per cent GDP growth in 2004 signaled a full recovery from the downturn, which occurred during the period 2001 to 2002. For this reason, this Government is anxious about the events in the international petroleum market and their likely impact on the economy of St. Lucia. The Government is aware that any increase in petroleum prices will have inflationary consequences on key sectors such as transport, construction, and wholesale and retail trade

Supply constraints and increasing demand

Developments in international oil prices have been influenced by a number of factors including, increased supply side pressures and increasing global demand. On the demand side, newly developed economies such as China and India have been increasing their demand as their economies continue to expand. China's recent attempts to slow down the expansion of their economy by floating the Chinese Yuan to a basket of currencies has not yielded significant results in terms of reducing the supply for fuel. The summer driving season in the United States and increased car sales have also placed upward pressure on the demand for oil. Further, the International Energy Agency has forecasted that global energy demands will rise to a record 86.4 million barrels per day in the fourth quarter of 2005.

Supply side constraints are generating greater concern, as a number of factors are impacting on potential oil supply. Fears of political instability in the Middle East, and new security concerns about possible terror attacks in Saudi Arabia and the reopening of Uranium processing plants in Iran have placed upward pressure on international oil prices. In the United States, the supply of oil has been further constrained by refinery capacity due to breakdowns occurring at various refineries and the closure of at least three refineries. Further, the forecast for an intense hurricane season and the impact of tropical storms has constrained supply at refineries along the Gulf of Mexico. Other supply concerns include the inability of OPEC countries to further boost their production of crude oil as a response to growing demand in an attempt to lower prices.



Prime Minister Dr. Kenny Anthony

Impact on oil prices

The factors, which I have just mentioned, have placed unrelenting pressure on international oil prices. It is useful to compare the price of petroleum during the period 2003 to 2004 on the one hand, to the position in 2004 to 2005 on the other hand. In December 2003, petroleum prices averaged US\$32.39 per barrel. By June 2004, when the Government of St. Lucia took a policy decision to increase prices at the pump, the price averaged US \$37.88 per barrel. In December 2004, the price averaged \$43.14 per barrel, representing a 33 per cent increase over the average for 2003.

Continued on page 3



Oil price increases will affect prices of services



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# FREE EYE SCREENING PROGRAMME

## IMPROVING THE VISION OF THOUSANDS OF SAINT LUCIANS

Over one thousand persons in every major community in Saint Lucia will receive free eye screening from Monday August 22nd, 2005. The programme begins at the Babonneau Multi Purpose Centre and is a collaborative effort by Saint Lucia's Ministry of Health, Human Services, Family Affairs and Gender Relations and the Embassy of the Republic of Cuba.

The programme is being viewed as an opportunity to handle the backlog of cases of eye problems on the island. In addition it will pave the way for a more efficient clinic when an Ophthalmologist

is appointed in September 2005 and the island's main eye clinic refurbished.

Two weeks ago Saint Lucia's Prime Minister Honourable Dr. Kenny Anthony and Cuban Ambassador His Excellency Victor Rameriz launched the programme that is expected to provide residents with free eye screening, with the hope of restoring vision to hundreds of persons. Thousands of persons will be seen by a team of Cuban doctors over an eight week period at facilities across Saint Lucia. Persons who are diagnosed and recommended for surgical treatment will be flown to hospitals in Cuba where they will be treated.



Clinic in session at Babonneau

### SCHEDULE OF COMMUNITY VISITS

Babonneau	August 22-26	Babonneau Multi Purpose Centre
Castries	August 29	VBCC
	August 30 – September 1	Cultural Centre
	September 2	Entrepot HRDC
Mon Repos	September 5	Mon Repos Health Centre
Gros Islet	September 6-9	Gros Islet Polyclinic
La Resource, Richfond Dennery	September 12-16	Dennery Hospital
Micoud	September 19	Micoud Multi Purpose Centre
Vieux Fort	September 20-22	Vieux Fort Town Hall
Laborie	September 23	Laborie Parish Hall
Choiseul/Soufriere	September 26-27	La Fargue Health Centre
	September 28-30	Soufriere Hospital
Anse La Raye	October 3	Anse La Raye Health Centre
Canaries	October 4	Canaries Health Centre
La Bayee	October 5	La Bayee Community Centre
Castries	October 6-7	Open (Senior Citizens Homes)

The Ministry of Health, Human Services, Family Affairs and Gender Relations is encouraging the public to take advantage of the services of the Cuban authorities. Persons with eye problems especially cataracts, glaucoma and retinal degenerative disorders should contact the health centres in their community or district for registration and schedules.

## Taking Care of Diabetes

A team of health professionals called on Prime Minister Dr. Kenny Anthony on Monday August 22nd to provide him with an update on an important project which is aimed at addressing diabetic a foot care in Saint Lucia. The team included nationals of the United States and United Kingdom, some of who have strong relations in the Caribbean. The team members were: Lennox Mc Garrell (podiatrist), Steve Zielinski (pharmacist); Betty Sayed (pharmacist); Maria Edward (podiatrist); Margaret Theophilus (nurse) and Mary Matthias (diabetic nurse specialist and programme coordinator).

During their two week stay in Saint Lucia, they were engaged in an extensive programme of education, screening for diabetes with special emphasis on foot care. The training targeted patients, the general public and nurses. The worked directly with

seven communities and two nursing homes.

The programme received the full support of the Ministry of Health Human Services, Family Affairs and Gender Relations. Hon. Damian Greaves was present at the briefing.



Prime Minister Dr. Kenny Anthony



Prime Minister with the group of health care givers

## CONDOLENCES

The Government of Saint Lucia want to reassure the members of public that in spite of media reports to the contrary, expressions of condolence were made to the people of Martinique who lost friends and family in the recent plane crash in Venezuela. The crash occurred on the morning of Tuesday August 16th resulting in the death of 152 residents of Martinique.

In the days following the accident, the Government of Saint Lucia extended condolences in the following ways. Firstly, in a statement issued on August 17th 2005, Prime Minister Hon. Dr. Kenny D. Anthony stated that he was touched by the accident and shared the pain and sorrow of the people of Martinique as they attempted to deal with their tremendous loss.

Secondly, official expressions of condolence were made to the Mr. Bernard Venzo French Ambassador to Saint Lucia through the Ministry of External Affairs International Trade and Civil Aviation.

Thirdly, the Saint Lucia's General Counsel in Martinique Mr. Casius Elias also officially expressed condolences to the government authorities in Martinique on behalf of the Government and people of Saint Lucia. Mr. Elias also made several public statements through the me-



French Ambassador Mr. Bernard Venzo

dia in Saint Lucia and Martinique on the plane crash and its effects on the people of Martinique.

Prime Minister Kenny Anthony reaffirmed that the Government of Saint Lucia will continue its communications with the People of Martinique through the offices of the Consul General, Mr. Casius Elias.

The Government and people of Saint Lucia will be represented at the funeral of the victims of the plane crash by a member of the cabinet of Ministers.

# RESPONSE TO OIL PRICE INCREASES

Continued from page 1

In January 2005, petroleum prices averaged US\$46.73. During the month of July, petroleum prices continued to increase to average US\$58.67. On August 11, 2005, prices hit another record high soaring to US\$65.80 per barrel. This represents a 73.7 per cent increase over the price in June 2004, when the Government of St. Lucia last increased prices. Industry analysts predict that oil prices may reach US\$70/barrel and beyond, for the rest of the year and well into 2006. Goldman and Sachs, one of the leading financial forecasting firms, predict that petroleum prices of US\$60 per barrel will remain a phenomenon within the medium term (one to two years).

Impact on government revenue

The escalating oil prices have had a dramatic and adverse impact on Government revenue and thus will impact on its ability to proceed with the planned expenditure for 2005/06. Despite the increase in prices at the pump last June, the Government of St. Lucia has foregone a substantial amount of revenue and is currently subsidizing the price of some petroleum products such as cooking gas.

Consumption tax rates for petroleum products have declined to the extent that the government has had to refund consumption taxes to suppliers to support their guaranteed margins and continue the sale of the products. Assuming oil prices remain as high as US\$65/barrel, government consumption tax receipts from unleaded gas and diesel are projected at \$6.1 million in 2005/06 compared to \$25.4 million and \$37.1 million in 2004/05 and 2003/04 respectively.

The overall revenue projection is worse when other petroleum products are considered. Consumption tax rates in 2005/06 are forecasted at -\$1.99 for kerosene; -\$0.26 for 25 lbs LPG and -\$35.82 for LPG cylinders greater than 25 lbs. The actual average per gallon consumption tax rates for the period April 1 to August 9 is detailed in Table I below;

Table I: Consumption Tax Rates for various Petroleum Products			
	2005/06	2004/05	2003/04
Unleaded Gas	\$1.00	\$1.79	\$2.75
Diesel	\$0.58	\$2.09	\$2.60
Kerosene	-\$1.66	\$0.25	\$1.30
LPG (up to 25 lbs)	-\$0.30	\$0.01	\$0.19
LPG (more than 25 lbs)	-\$0.21	\$0.10	\$0.28

The table highlights significant erosion in the per unit yield of the consumption tax rate for petroleum products over the years. The consumption tax rate yield on unleaded gas moved from EC\$2.75 per gallon in 2003/04 to \$1.00 per gallon in 2005/06. The consumption tax yield on diesel moved from \$2.60 in 2003/04 to \$0.58 in 2005/06.

Assuming that the price of oil remains at approximately US\$65.00 per barrel, the Government of St. Lucia is likely to forego EC\$ 20.6 million in consumption

tax collection from the sale of diesel and unleaded petroleum products. Further, it has been forecasted that the Government of St. Lucia will lose approximately \$1.3 million, which will have to be paid to LPG and kerosene suppliers, in order to maintain existing prices.

Policy response from the region

In light of the increase in international prices, various Governments in the region have decided to pass on some of the burden of this increase to consumers. On Monday, August 8, 2005, the Government of Antigua announced an increase in retail prices by \$1.00 both on unleaded gas and diesel. Thus, unleaded gasoline is now EC\$9.30 and diesel stands at \$9.31. Montserrat has also announced that effective August 15, 2005; the price of unleaded gas will increase by 95 cents to \$9.50/gallon. Other Governments in the Caribbean, who have increased petroleum prices in 2005, include Anguilla, Dominica, Barbados, Guyana and the Bahamas. The current price of unleaded gas and diesel in the Caribbean is highlighted as follows:

Table II: Petroleum Prices in Various Caribbean States as at August 2005			
Country	Unleaded Gasoline (\$EC)	Diesel (\$EC)	Effective Date
Anguilla	9.70	8.30	April, 2005
Antigua and Barbuda	9.30	9.31	August 8th, 2005
Barbados	12.89	8.29	April, 8th, 2005
Dominica	9.87	8.99	June, 2005
Grenada	7.50	7.00	December, 2000
Montserrat	9.50	7.95	August, 15, 2005
St. Kitts and Nevis	8.30	8.03	February, 2005
St. Lucia	8.50	7.75	June 23, 2004
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	8.00	6.50	January 1st, 2005
St. Maarten	11.03	9.72	April 20th, 2005
Trinidad and Tobago	5.85	2.93	March, 2004
Jamaica	7.07	7.60	August 18, 2005
Guyana	9.57	5.30	March 27th, 2005
Cayman Islands	10.80		March, 2004
Bahamas	9.69	7.67	April, 2005

It should be noted that in most of the countries highlighted above; drivers/motorists must pay an annual licensing fee. Vehicle owners in Saint Lucia are not required to pay annual licensing fees.

Policy response from st. Lucia

The Government of St. Lucia has carefully reviewed the developments in the international petroleum market and balanced this against the economic recovery that is currently taking place in St. Lucia. Currently, activity in the construction sector is very buoyant, and the tourism industry appears to have gained full recovery after the decline in 2001-2002. The Government of St. Lucia recognizes that an increase in



Air travel will be affected

implementation of the recurrent and capital budget for 2005/2006. In light of the factors highlighted above, the Government of St. Lucia has decided on an upward adjustment in the price of unleaded gasoline and diesel by EC\$ 1.00 respectively. This would result in a price of \$9.50 per gallon for unleaded gas and \$8.75 per gallon for diesel. These changes will become effective on Wednesday August 24, 2005.

Policy on cooking gas

The Government of St. Lucia also deliberated on a price increase for LPG (cooking gas). However, the Government has decided that the price of LPG gas should remain unchanged. This decision reflects the desire to limit the inflationary consequences of this price change on the economy. In particular, the Government hopes to cushion the impact on low-income households. This therefore means that the Government of St. Lucia will continue to subsidize the price of LPG cooking gas.

I cannot promise that this policy will continue indefinitely. Much will depend on the future movements in the prices of petroleum on the international market.

The Government is fully aware that increases in the prices of petroleum have led to increases in the cost of production, shipping and in the prices we pay for imported commodities, goods and services. I wish to make it absolutely clear that the Government will not hesitate to impose price controls, if it feels that importers and retailers are taking undue advantage of consumers.

Finally, I want to urge each and every one of you to take greater charge of your energy consumption. I recommend that persons seek to conserve fuel by avoiding unnecessary use of their vehicles and wastage in electricity consumption. Additionally, I encourage you to invest in energy saving bulbs and devices in order to offset the likely financial impact of the increase in petroleum prices.

Thank you, for being with me tonight and may God be always with you.



The biggest impact on fuel for vehicles



Buildings must be designed for energy conservation



Good day, fellow Saint Lucians, you know there are many things we take for granted, until of course, we suddenly miss them. So this week I have chosen to converse with you about something we have in abundance but which, as in so many other cases, we simply take for granted.

Abundance of literary talent

By the way, I do not speak of the abundance of natural beauty that has earned our island, the title “Helen of the West Indies”. Neither do I speak of our flora and fauna, our sandy beaches or our abundance of hospitality, nor do I speak of our World Heritage Site (The Pitons), or the St. Lucia Jazz Festival. No, it’s not about bananas, coconuts or mangoes. Instead, I speak of our abundance of literary talent.

The world has recognized that our own Derek Walcott is the best writer in the English language. This land has also produced several other literary giants who, in their own right, have risen to the top of their craft – authors, poets, researchers among them. We take the praise for the achievements of our Nobel Laureates, Honourable Derek Walcott and Sir Arthur Lewis, but too few of us remember or acknowledge the contributions of several others to the development and sustenance of local literary talent.

Yes, we do have many people who, simply put, can write well – they are good at story telling, at painting pictures with words in ways that remain on the canvas of our memories. Their words leave photographic images that stay with us. They share and they com-



Life Styles

municate. Then, there are also the photographers who use electronic and digital technology to take the images from their locations and bring them to us in the comfort of our homes, offices and in selected publications.

We have hardly noticed it, but we have developed in recent years a publishing industry that has grown and expanded in many directions and dimensions.

The efforts of our writers, photographers, printers and publishers have resulted in the flourishing of a number of high-quality, full-colour, glossy and sophisticated magazines.

I shall list some of those magazines – and I say “only some”, because I am sure I cannot recall all of them.

The trail blazers

First among those I wish to recall today are the trailblazers – those magazines that set the pace and have stood the test of time.

Among the trailblazers are Tropical Traveller and She Caribbean, Visions

# Painting Pictures With Words

## PM Converses with the Nation



Prime Minister Dr. Kenny Anthony

of St. Lucia, Paradise St. Lucia and the Business Focus.

Tropical Traveller started with a newspaper format over twelve years ago, featuring our best tourism sites and products. They explored and shared our local folklore, culture, history, archaeology and natural heritage. Aimed at visitors to the island, it offered insights on how to get around St. Lucia, the great escapes, the night life, the shops, the beaches, the heritage tourism sites, the hotels, the spas and the tours, the sports, the weird and the wonderful. It also provided “feedbacks” from the visitors through interviews and features. The magazine has now taken on a glossy look with a size that is more easily handled. It is increasingly used as a gift by St. Lucians travelling abroad, who pass them on to friends and potential visitors.

Still in the tourism department, Visions of St. Lucia is a tourist guide published by the St. Lucia Hotels & Tourism Association. Visions also features photographs, stories and advertisements that collectively offer visitors an all-encompassing guide to St. Lucia. It presents Saint Lucia as a unique, intriguing and breath-taking island. Published once a year by local entrepreneur, Tony Austin, Visions, is also endorsed by the Minister of Tourism and the Director of the St. Lucia Tourist Board, both of whom penned messages in the current and latest issue of this high quality local publication. This year marks the 15th anniversary of the magazine in the service of the local tourism industry. The publish-



Travel

Business publications

But it is not only in tourism promotion that our writers, photographers and printers shine. This is also true of the business community, which has for several years been the focus of a publication entitled Business Focus. Now in its 30th issue, this magazine is produced six times a year by Advertising and Marketing Services (AMS), the same company behind Paradise St. Lucia. It offers features on Finance and Banking, Human Resources, Management, Technology, Trade, Travel & Tourism, Advertising and Marketing. This magazine for and by the business community, features who’s doing what, where and how in the private sector. It also features a section called “Government in Focus”, which highlights government initiatives of interest to the private sector. But one popular section of the magazine is that which features New Company Registrations – a veritable guide to who’s going into what business -- and with whom.

Two other business magazines come to mind. One is by the Julian’s Supermarket chain, which presented the Living Today magazine to its customers; the other is the Cimpex Group of Companies, which published the Home

ers have indicated that they publish 100,000 copies annually that are circulated locally and internationally.

Paradise St. Lucia is one of several similar island tourism guide publications by another local entrepreneur, Lokesh Singh. A bi-annual publication, Paradise St. Lucia is a pocket-sized version of a guide that’s bright, colourful, easy to read and extremely portable for any handbag, pouch or large enough back pocket. It welcomes visitors to the island and offers insights into shopping, hotels, restaurants, culture, entertainment and real estate. It also seeks to feature those sights, sounds, tastes and emotions that make St. Lucia unique

A class of its own

She Caribbean is a magazine at the top of its class. As a publication specializing in issues about women and by women, it features articles that offer interesting angles on social issues. It even explores sensitive subjects such as masculinity and infidelity. Its features range from marriage to motherhood, from beauty to body talk and from profiles to portraits. As with Tropical Traveller, the images in She Caribbean feature the work of some of our best nature and fashion photographers on the island and in the region. Indeed, “She” over the years became “She Caribbean”, reflecting more regional images and topics of interests to our regional community. Both Tropical Traveller and She Caribbean are published by the Star Publishing Company, a local company which also expanded in all directions since 1997.



Professional Debates

Companion. Both magazines have served their purpose.

Living Today, was published by Tony Austin, edited by Judy Deterville and published in collaboration with the Julian’s Supermarket Group. It featured articles focusing on everything from Kweyol and food, to business, health and travel. It began in January 2003 and was published quarterly, but it seems to have been shelved – hopefully, only for a while.

Life style publications

The Home Companion was published by Alwyn St. Omer and edited by Vincent Lewis and was presented six times a year and was published in collaboration with the Winnmark Group – a subsidiary of the Cimpex Group of Companies -- with the objective of promoting self-improvement, healthy lifestyles and family values. It looked at art and culture, history, fashion, cooking, home-making, consumer interests and national consciousness. Like Living Today, Home Companion also seems to have been shelved – and hopefully just for a while as well.

The Shopper was another interesting publication. It contained mainly advertisements, but it also included one or two feature articles of interest to shoppers, whether advising on choice of purchases or on the wide range of purchasing sources. We got a glimpse of what’s for sale, what’s for rent and of course, where the good deals could be found. The Shopper changed shape and size from time to time, from a regular magazine shape to a pocket-sized shape. Unfortunately, we have not seen it for some time but I have been told that it’s “gone electronic” – meaning, it is now available on TV and, perhaps, online.

St. Lucian Lifestyles is another magazine that appeared but unfortunately disappeared. Edited by Andre Alexander, it was produced every three months, featuring articles ranging from life in the ghettos to the island’s major festivals, health and community, home and garden, pets and planting. One of its most recent issues featured an interview with the father of local literary giant Mc Donald Dixon, who was one of the last remaining local practitioners of herbal medicine. Here too, it is hoped that its apparent disappearance is only temporary.

happenings to regional realities.

A professional publications

But while some of those I have just mentioned may have gone into hibernation, there is one interesting publication -- by professionals – that has set the stage here for professionals of a particular discipline to raise public interest in what they do and to explain and interact with others about the nature of their profession. I speak here about Insight, the official publication of the local Association of Professional Engineers. This publication is glossy and visually gripping. It is delivered to you in real class. It is individually addressed in transparent plastic wrapping, and so makes those who receive copies feel they were personally designated recipients. Edited by Shanta King and published by the association of local engineers, Insight plays a great part in getting regular persons to better understand the issues that confront those in the world of professional engineering.

A new photo magazine

I want to make special mention here of a publication that is not a periodic magazine, but which has made and continues to make a great contribution to the presentation of St. Lucia as a destination worth visiting by tourists in search of that one place they never discovered. I speak of a special publication published by an investor group that has certainly dropped anchor in St. Lucia’s waters. I speak here of a photo magazine simply called “The Land, The People and The Light.” It was published as a result of a special initiative by Doubloon International, the developers behind Discovery at Marigot Bay, the project that aims to change the face of St. Lucia’s most sheltered Hurricane Hole. John and Judith Verity, with the help of Molly Mac Daniel, secured the services of one of the best photographers in Britain to come to St. Lucia to photograph images of St. Lucia and compile them into a single picture portrait – a veritable photo album – of the people and places in the land they chose to invest in. The photographs are virtually alive and the characters and places depicted each have a story that is worth telling – and worth knowing.

A renaissance magazine

But I cannot end this tribute to our writers, photographers and publishers without highlighting what has



The Arts

been done from, in and of Vieux Fort. I speak here of the publication called Jako, which is published by Jako Productions, a Vieux Fort-based company headed by Dr Anderson Reynolds. Now in its second issue, this is the publication which seeks to capture and present



Public sector news

the works of those who have laboured in the cultural and historic field. A published writer in his own right, Anderson Reynolds has so far published two books, one of which has won the M&C Fine Arts Award for literature. His books seek to capture moments of our history and present them in language that is vivid and touching. The second issue of Jako is out and, like the first edition; it seeks to paint a picture of what we do, how we do it and why. The magazine seeks to expand our intellectual boundaries, sometimes by exploring socio-political issues of emerging significance. I will not pretend that I like Jako just because it is a Vieux Fort product. But then, if you get and see the magazine and read and digest its contents, you will undoubtedly agree with me that it is a renaissance magazine that has lots of promise in its quest to highlight those aspects of St. Lucia’s fascinating social and political history.

Inspiration for a generation

If I have sounded like I was reviewing some of our best publications so far, it is not because I wanted to give you a school-based literature lesson. Rather, it is because I wanted to acknowledge, in a sincere way, the contributions of our writers, photographers, printers and publishers. Over the past eight years they have laboured in the vineyards of

the contemporary literary world to produce words and images that feed our intellect and fill us with pride.

Yes, we have Derek Walcott, Garth St. Omer, Kendal Hippolyte, Adrian Augier, Robert Lee, Stanley French, Patrick Anthony and the many others who have blazed the trail and whose contributions are etched in our literary history. But, as I hope I have shown in the preceding minutes, they have inspired a whole new generation of writers, who, working with the best photographers available and the best printing and publishing facilities available here,

have been able to produce magazines that are as exciting as they are insightful, as informative as they are pleasing to the eye. I enjoy them all. They fill me with pride. Go out and get copies. I hope they do for you what they have done for me.



Business

Until next week, this is where I say goodbye for today. I wish you God’s blessings.



Youth



Consumers



# New NCA Board Appointed

**A** new Board and management team have been appointed to oversee the affairs of the National Conservation Authority (NCA).

Minister for Social Transformation, Culture and Local Government Hon. Menissa Rambally confirmed the appointment of the Board chaired by retired Civil Servant Wilbert King, and the management team headed by new General Manager Augustine Dominique, former Principal of the Laborie Boys' Primary school.

"At this stage I can just say that I am looking forward to working with the new Board and the management team. And I am looking forward to the National Conservation Authority doing its work to ensure it can fulfil its mandate and continue to find meaningful ways to benefit our country and the people of

Saint.Lucia," the Minister said. The new chairman of the NCA feels he will be able to use his vast experience to assist the organisation reach its objectives.

" I believe with a new set of persons with new visions and so forth we should be able to achieve quite a bit for the organisation and to take it to a higher level. I believe we owe it to the public to give a good account of ourselves, so in the final analysis the citizens of Saint Lucia can see the work of the NCA as contributing to the upliftment of life generally in Saint Lucia." Mr Kind said.

Other members of the Board are Mrs Angelina John, Mr Ivor Daniel, Mr. John Husbands, Mr Albert St. Clair, Miss Madgerie Jameson, Miss Nandi Deterville, Mr Denys Springer and Mr. Wilfred Maxwell.



Hon. Menissa Rambally meets with new NCA Board

# Eleven Organizations Receive NCF Grants

**S**ome eleven projects involving schools and homes for the elderly will implemented in the coming months as a result of funding from the National Community Foundation (NCF). The Foundation held a grant giving ceremony on Monday, August 22nd, when eleven organizations were presented with grants totalling some \$51,000.00.

The Foundation said it will continue to invest the funds into its numerous charitable causes. NCF Board member Mr. Lucian Isidore provided a brief report on the Foundations latest activities.

"During the period August 2004 to July 2005 the National Community Foundation (NCF) disbursed approximately \$400,000.00 to 32 organizations for the implementation of 36 projects as well as assisting 49 individuals requiring medical interventions. We also assisted another 5 individuals who were made homeless as a result of fires."

While noting the continued support of the private sector NCF Board Member Lucian Isidore called on the public to establish Donor Advised Funds with the NCF.

"Such funds are personal endowments that are created to support a stated charitable or developmental purpose. Donor Advise funds are one of the most efficient charitable estate planning tools available to anyone looking to create a legacy of charitable giving that can last for many genera-

tions". He said. "The NCF have so far formally established one Donor Advised Fund entitled the Brian Bernard Memorial Fund. The Foundation says Donor Advised Funds will be managed for a small fee, while contributions will be 100 percent tax deductible The purpose of the fund maybe general or specific, Every Donor Advised Fund has its own name whether a family or Company or a title that reflects the objectives". Before disbursing the financial assistance, the NCF was presented with a check of \$125,000.00 from the National Insurance Cooperation, the NIC.



Mr. Lucian Isidore



Persons attending the NCF ceremony

# Ambassador Laurent Corrects Misinformation

**S**aint Lucia's Special Envoy to Brussels Ambassador Edwin Laurent met with Prime Minister Hon. Dr. Ralph Gonsalves OF Saint Vincent and the Grenadines last week, to address a wide range of issues related to the new arrangements for the export of bananas to Europe. Dr. Gonsalves is CARICOM's lead Prime Minister with responsibility for bananas.

Ambassador Laurent, currently on a mission to the Caribbean region, also stopped over in St. Lucia Friday, August 19th. At a media briefing Ambassador Laurent provided an update on the ongoing World Trade Organisation (WTO) negotiation process and the probable implications for the Windward Islands.

He says much of the opinions expressed since the August 1st report by the negotiators in the banana case, have resulted from misinformation. Another

misconception according to him is that the European Union (EU) will no longer be providing protection to ACP (African Caribbean and Pacific countries) bananas. Ambassador Laurent notes that the report, which is a public document, is completely different from what has been articulated in the press.

He says while the negotiators considered the EU's plan to impose a tariff of 230 Euro per-ton on bananas from ACP producers as of January1st 2006, they have also suggested that the figures decided upon by the EU to justify it's position are unsatisfactory.

"What it says is that the FAO figures which were relied upon by the EU were not reliable. So the task then is to go back to the drawing board and to come up with figures which will be acceptable."

Meanwhile, Minister for Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries, Hon. Ignatius Jean says the Government of St. Lucia, will continue to throw its support behind the banana industry.

"And the manifestation of a lot of the work of the government of Saint Lucia with support from the European Union is all over Saint Lucia for all of us to see. The work of the BERU and the work of the Banana Industry Trust and I should reiterate what I said in the past, that the industry will never be the same as it was in the ear of green gold but certainly I believe and I am very optimistic that we will continue to have a banana industry all be it will not be the same industry we had in that era." Mr. Jean said.



Amabassador Edwin Laurent



Ambassador Edwin Laurent, Hon. Ignatius Jean, Mr. Martin Satney



Bananas still a vital part of the economy of Saint Lucia

# FLOOD MITIGATION WORKS



The main drain on Jn Baptiste Street



Temporary bus terminal in the Gardens



Materials being prepared for the project



Existing drains in the Gardens

# TO ADDRESS FLOODING IN CASTRIES



The relief pond



A section of the completed drain on Chausee Road

# Former Fire Chief Augustin Gaspard Retires after 38 years of Service

**A**fter serving Saint Lucia for almost four decades, first as a teacher and then as a career fireman, former Chief of the St. Lucia Fire and Emergency Services Mr. Augustin Gaspard was duly honoured earlier this month.

Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Home Affairs and Internal Security Mrs. Jacinta St. Helen praised Mr. Gaspard's long tenure of outstanding service. She said the opening ceremony of the Vieux Fort Fire Station was a fitting time to high-

light Mr. Gaspard's record of service as construction works of the station, commenced under his watch.

"It is anticipated that his legacy in terms of discipline, compliance with rules and regulations governing the department, timelines in the submission of information and reports and quality administration, will live on and will serve as a platform in placing the operations of the department at a higher level."

For his part Mr. Gaspard said he looked forward to seeing the continued growth of the institution. He preached discipline to the newest members of

the Fire Service. "I've told every recruit that I have ever taught that you must be disciplined, if you are not disciplined you can never succeed. You must be disciplined, that's what got me to where I am today" said Gaspard.

Mr. Gaspard who was presented with an Award by Minister for Home Affairs and Internal Security Senator Honourable Calixte George was appointed to the helm of the service from 1998 and proceeded on retirement on August 6th 2005. Mr. Paul Edgar is, at present, the Acting Chief Fire Officer.



Former Chief of the St. Lucia Fire and Emergency Services Mr. Augustin Gaspard



# TOURISM MINISTER PIERRE TOURS COCO PALM

**T**ourism Minister Philip J. Pierre feels investment in the construction of new hotels on the island reflects a level of confidence in the economy of Saint Lucia by local investors.

Speaking during a tour of the newly opened Coco Palm hotel, the second property in the Coco Resorts line, Mr Pierre lauded the local owners for their direct investment in the tourism industry.

He said this latest initiative sent a strong message about Saint Lucia’s entrepreneurial spirit.

“This property is a Saint Lucian property. I’ve always spoken about standards, about Saint Lucia being able to meet world standards and this is an example of how Saint Lucians have the ability and the capability to meet world standards. First of all the contractor is a Saint Lucian, the architect is a Saint Lucian, the general manager is a Saint Lucian, the owners are Saint Lucians, and during the construction stage of that hotel an over 350 Saint Lucian workforce was employed.”

Chairman of Coco Resorts Mr. Michael Chastanet said building the hotel was one way of showing their Saint Lucian partners they were serious about getting them involved in an industry that will become the industry of the future.

“I know the Prime Minister has been heavily criticised from time to time



Mr. Allan Chastanet presents the features of the new hotel

about using the word transition but in actual fact the Prime Minister and his Cabinet were indeed correct in that we had a banana industry now we have to move to tourism. When we move from one to another there is a transition and what you are going to find is that all the children of the farmers are the ones who will be working at the hotels. They are the ones that have to make that transition a reality.” Mr. Chastanet said

The owners say they plan to continue the Coco Resorts brand outside of St. Lucia, making forays into the Windward Islands of Dominica, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Tobago.



Mr. Claude Guillaume (Architect), Mr. Hilary Modeste (Director of Tourism) and Proprietor Mr. Michael Chastanet



New face of tourism properties

# GFL Charles Airport Major Renovation Work Started

**O**perations at the George F.L. Charles Airport in Castries will, within the next few weeks, come to a complete standstill in order to facilitate the efficient implementation of a major project on upgrading and renovation of the airport runway.

The complete closure will come into effect when section two of the project kicks off. Chief Engineer at the Saint Lucia Air and Seaports Authority (SLASPA) Chidi Tobias said that during other phases of the works, day-time activity will continue at the George FL Charles airport.

SLASPA says that upon completion the airport previously is expected to enjoy a twenty two year design lifespan.

The Saint Lucia air and Sea Ports Authority is continuing dialogue with all partners who are likely to suffer inconveniences.



New surface for the runway



Continuing upgrade of parking area

**THIS WEEK ON NTN**

Sat. Aug. 27th - Fri. September 2nd, 2005

The GIS Speaks with key members of one of the island’s main Seance Groups on the up-coming La Woz Festival - Mon. Aug. 29th, 8:00 p.m.

- **Fighting Poverty in the Caribbean: The World of the CDB** – Mon. August 29th, 9:00 p.m.
- **Vive St. Lucie** –Tues. August 29th, 8:00 p.m.
- Highlights of St. Lucian Culture – Wed. August 31st, 8:00 p.m.
- **WTO Press Briefing on ongoing Arbitration Process** – Thurs. September 1st, 9:00 p.m.
- **Equal Terms, Sexual & Reproductive Rights along with Women in Politics** -September 2nd, 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](http://www.stlucia.gov.lc) and then click on the NTN icon.

[www.stlucia.gov.lc](http://www.stlucia.gov.lc)