

BVC: What makes AIA a great place to work?


Robertson: “We employ around 320 people and more than half of our team have been with us from the onset. What makes Argyle Airport a good place is because it’s special to the heart of many Vincentians. For many years we worked at the ET Joshua Airport, a smaller facility on the southwest coast of Saint Vincent that operated for about 60 years. We had our challenges because the location was landlocked on three sides, so there were many limitations to operations – which included having transcontinental flights because the runway was such that we had to take off in the wrong direction.

“For many people, just the thought of having a brand-new facility in a location where operation is smooth, safe, and easy makes this a big catch for us. And we’re an organization with much potential. We have an excellent team. Several

departments are led by managers who have demonstrated once and again how capable they are. One case in point was when we had the explosive volcanic eruption on April 9, 2021. It was an extremely difficult period for us, because we were located in the green ‘safe’ zone’ and then when the eruptions started, we expected maybe some ash fall for a couple of days and then we’d go back to our normal life.

“But the force of the many eruptions was so severe that the airport was blanketed in ash. It was a gray mass, like snow. Before the eruption we had established and tested a clean-up plan. So we thought we were ready, until we saw the volume of ash. The first question that came to mind was: where would we put it? The presence of the ash in the vicinity of an airport is a hazard because it will blow back up into the air. So we brainstormed and came up with a cleanup plan that was extremely well executed – headed by our Building and Civil Engineer – and we were able to clean up the airport in about two weeks, by trucking the ash to nearby areas that were not in the wind.

“The first place we cleaned was the roof of the terminal building because the weight of the ash, if it got wet, could have led to collapse of the roof. A group of volunteer staff members climbed



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