

# BUSINESS VIEW

SEPT / OCT 2016

Caribbean

## **CARIBBEAN WATER AND WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT**

*Handling the most  
precious resource in  
the Caribbean*

**National Water  
Commission of Jamaica**  
*Serving you in so many ways*

**The Water Authority of  
the Cayman Islands**  
*Supplier of the island's water*

**Caribbean Water and  
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*Handling unique water and  
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## Corner View



Here we are once again, Business View Caribbean fans, subscribers, readers, features, and enthusiasts (I'm hoping that you all fall under the title of the latter). As we storm full-steam ahead into the last quarter of the year, it appears that 2016 may have gotten off to a slow start for many businesses. However, as we look deeper into the numbers, we can see that companies are just now hitting some of their fiscal projections, while also focusing on the infrastructure that will properly allow them to operate on autopilot as the year's end approaches.

As I started to analyze this pattern of what sometimes appears as instability in terms of the strength and growth of economic development, I also took a good long look at some of the factors that could be underpinning this position. As I became increasingly aware of some of the Caribbean's challenges this year, I was drawn to the word "fortitude!"

As defined by Dictionary.Com, fortitude is: mental and emotional strength in facing difficulty, adversity, danger, or temptation courageously. I attribute this word to the executives of the businesses who have to adjust to constant changes in the financial, social, logistical, and even climatic challenges that arise at the drop of dime.

This year brought on financial distress from many different angles, dating back to the tail end of last year when the oil and energy industry was widely affected. Countries with large dependencies upon oil, like Trinidad & Tobago, were almost blindsided by the rapid drop of oil prices. As the country changed administrations with the historical win of the current Prime Minister, the Honourable Dr. Keith Rowley, it was a hope-filled change that promised more growth and assistance to all of the businesses of the country, as opposed to just those at the top.

However, almost within days of the new Prime Minister taking control, he had to give a countrywide speech about the dismal "State of Affairs" that T & T was under, as a result of the oil and energy industry crisis. With a country that depends heavily on the energy sector - to the tune of almost 50 percent of its GDP (roughly \$15 Billion) - it somehow had the fortitude to remain a financial powerhouse as the wealthiest country in the Caribbean, and only behind The United States and Canada in overall GDP per capita. Yes, that's good management. However, one must have the "fortitude" to deal with an obstacle that can become debilitating to others, in order to manage a route through the storm.

And speaking of storms, no other region is more affected by climate than the Caribbean. Hurricanes threaten, not only the businesses of the Caribbean, but also the lives and livelihoods of all Caribbean residents. This year was no exception. What about Brexit? The decision of the UK's departure from the European Union is a major financial blow to multiple industries that are pivotal in to the economy of some Caribbean nations.

The list is long, and the consequences or benefits that lay ahead will depend solely upon how quickly and accurately you respond to these difficult situations. And while you may be able to act quickly, it's your accurate response that requires true fortitude from the persons and organizations making those decisions. It's with this understanding that I consider Caribbean businesses amongst the best in the world in business planning and management. I tip my hat to you all.

Until next time: Plan, Build, and continue to Prosper.

Andre Barefield

# A Dozen Outstanding Caribbean Resorts

*BVC's choices for your next Caribbean vacation*



## **Excellence Punta Cana**

Punta Cana, Dominican Republic

A swanky, adults-only, all-inclusive resort set on a palm tree-lined beach along the Atlantic coast.



## **Occidental Grand Aruba All Inclusive Resort**

Eagle Beach, Aruba

A high-end resort for families and couples right on the beach and just steps away from many tourist attractions.



## **Frenchman's Reef & Morning Star Marriott Beach Resort**

Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas

Overlooking Morningstar Bay, this upscale resort, set on a rocky peninsula, features four restaurants, four bars, four pools, a spa, and a fitness center.



## **La Concha Renaissance San Juan Resort**

San Juan, Puerto Rico

This stylish, beachfront resort features cool, retro-style rooms with free Wi-Fi and premium cable channels. Breakfast is free.



## Atlantis, Royal Towers, Autograph Collection

Paradise Island, Bahamas

The most popular resort in the Bahamas features the world's largest open-air marine habitat – the Aquaventure Water Park, as well as 21 restaurants and 19 bars and lounges.



## Iberostar Grand Hotel Rose Hall

Montego Bay, Jamaica

Set on a white-sand beach, this chic, all-inclusive resort has five restaurant/bars, three outdoor pools, a swim-up bar, a spa, and a gym.



## Grand Cayman Beach Suites

Grand Cayman

Overlooking Seven Mile Beach, this relaxed resort surrounded by palm trees is close to The Blue Tip Golf Course and the Cayman Islands National Museum.



## Luxury Bahia Principe Cayo Levantado Don Pablo Collection

Samana Province, Dominican Republic

This resort is situated on its own stunning, tropical island bordered by breathtaking beaches. It's an ideal place to enjoy luxury, nature, and comfort.



## Galley Bay Resort

St. John's, Antigua

Situated on 40 acres of private paradise, this resort is surrounded by a tranquil bird sanctuary and a three-quarter-mile-long stretch of white sand beach.



## Sandals LaSource Grenada Resort and Spa

St. Georges, Grenada

Private plunge pools, cascading waterfalls, meandering river pools, and unlimited scuba diving combine to beckon the water enthusiast.



## BodyHoliday Saint Lucia

Castries, St. Lucia

This upscale, all-inclusive spa resort offers water sports, yoga and tai chi, tennis, and archery.



## Beaches Turks and Caicos Resort Villages and Spa

Providenciales, Turks and Caicos

This family-style resort features a 45,000 square foot water park and four villages boasting the architecture and ambiance of Italy, France, the Caribbean, and Key West.



## Saint Lucia Reaps Benefits from OECS Yachting Initiatives

Tourism officials in Saint Lucia are pleased about the considerable increase in the number of yacht calls to the island. Statistics released from the Saint Lucia Tourist Board revealed double digit growth (28.8%) in yachting arrivals for the period January to June 2016, in comparison to the same period in 2015.

Data collected at Rodney Bay and Marigot Bay marinas collectively tallied a total of 29,101 yacht arrivals, compared to 25,593 yachters who visited between January and June last year. An increase of 32.4% and 18.6% was recorded at Rodney Bay and Marigot Bay marinas respectively.

Cuthbert Didier, maritime consultant in the ministry of tourism (Saint Lucia) and Saint Lucia's representative on the OECS yachting committee, attributed

this increase to a combination of factors. However a main reason reported by Didier is the participation of Saint Lucia in major boat shows such as the Annapolis (United States Sailboat) Boat Show.

In October 2014, Saint Lucia joined six other OECS islands for a collective presence at the Annapolis Boat Show. A survey of patrons visiting the Eastern Caribbean Village at this event revealed that 96 percent of respondents intend to sail to the OECS in the future and there is a 77 percent chance that this is very likely occurrence.

Saint Lucia also participated in the OECS joint presence at the Toronto International Boat Show (TIBS) in January 2015; and the Boot Dusseldorf Boat Show in Germany in January 2016.

## Caribbean Destinations Must Offer a Diverse Product, says Air Canada Leisure Group President

Canadian travelers are demanding more diversity and greater options and Caribbean destinations must offer a diverse product if they are to remain attractive to this important market, president of Air Canada Leisure Group Craig Landry said.

Landry, whose responsibilities include Air Canada Vacation and the leisure carrier Air Canada Rouge, will deliver the feature address on Friday 16 September at the Caribbean Tourism Organization's State of the Tourism Industry Conference (SOTIC) taking place in Barbados from 14-16 September.

However, in an interview ahead of the event, the airline executive spoke of evolving consumer preferences, from accommodation to activities.

"From the perspective of the consumer it's all about choice, so choice means we need diversity in the type of products we can offer," Landry explained.

"What we're seeing is that with different types of markets, whether it's from family size or whether it's adults and couples, their needs are different in terms of the types of amenities and the types of services that respond to them and so we need to make sure we have segmentation and the ability to be able to address that.

"We're also seeing changes in people who are booking not necessarily non-inclusive - so that can be villas or people who might want to do some of

their own cooking or some of their own travel experiences and excursions when they're there; they're looking for a different type of living aboard type of approach when they stay in a destination and we need product to accommodate that and we need to make sure we have enough breadth and depth of



our product and diversity in the type of things we can offer to satisfy different segments of travel," he added.

The State of the Tourism Industry Conference, which has as its theme, "Honoring Our Legacy, Defining Our Future," is the pre-eminent tourism gathering in the region. It brings together tourism decision-makers, including ministers, commissioners and directors of tourism, hotel and airline executives, travel agents, students, the media and persons directly and indirectly involved in tourism. It is preceded by CTO business meetings, including meetings of the board of directors and the Council of Ministers and Commissioners of Tourism.

strong and effective policing represented one pillar of his ministry's five-pillar strategy to reduce crime. Montague indicated that the use of body-worn cameras is an element to be used to build trust between the citizens and the police. will aid in safeguarding the rights of the police and citizens. He noted that the handover of the cameras represented a further step in efforts to provide the police with the necessary tools and resources to perform their duties professionally and competently.



Meanwhile, United States ambassador to Jamaica, Luis Moreno, said the body camera is not a “panacea” but rather a “great step in the right direction.” He said the project represented one of the broad partnerships in crime prevention on which the United States and Jamaica have collaborated, and stressed the importance of regional coordination as an essential ingredient to combating crime.

Accepting the body cameras, Police Commissioner, Dr Carl Williams, said they “mark the start of a new chapter in police accountability.” He said the devices would enable the building of public trust between police and citizens and provide protection against false accusations. The commissioner noted that persons using the cameras will be trained and certified, and that those given cameras will be monitored.

## Police Body Cameras to be Deployed in Jamaica

A total of 120 body cameras are to be deployed in six police divisions in Jamaica, with the aim of building a strong and effective police force. Over time, the body camera project, which is a collaborative effort between the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF) and the United States Embassy, will benefit the rest of the Force. Speaking at the launch on August 25, National Security Minister, Robert Montague, said

the citizens and the police.

“This effort is a significant investment in improving transparency in the conduct of police operations. It provides an impartial third witness, especially in cases where accusations of biases and wrongdoings on the part of the police may be made,” he said.

The minister is expecting that the cameras, which are to be worn on the pockets or vests of the police,

Superintendent of Police in Charge of the Information and Communication Technology Division, Norris Rhoomes, in a demonstration of the cameras, described them as tamper-proof. He said each camera carries a serial number, which will be assigned to the police officer, adding that they are equipped with capabilities for recording night and day footage, up to five to ten hours, and can be kept for a period of time.





## Resort Developer Announces Scholarship Program for 50 Students from Dominica

Range Developments, the developer of luxury projects in the Caribbean, has announced the creation of 50 scholarships of \$1,000 each for students from the island of Dominica to help them pay for their studies.

"Education is the single most important thing one can give a young person," said Mohammed Asaria, Vice Chairman of Range Developments. "We are delighted to be participating in this project; we have a robust corporate social responsibility program and

look forward to closer links with the people of Dominica."

The initiative was welcomed by government officials. "This shows the partnership that we have with Range Developments and their willingness to give back to the people. That's what's good for us right now and we really have to cherish it," said Dr. Colin McIntyre, Minister for Planning, Economic Development and Investment.

Range Developments recently began construction work on the Cabrits Resort Kempinski, a 160-room hotel in Douglas Bay, close to the town of Portsmouth in the north of Dominica. This is the first development under the country's citizenship by investment program. Investors can obtain citizenship of the country by purchasing a share for US\$220,000

in a limited partnership structure.

Such citizenship programs are widespread not only among the Caribbean islands but also within Europe and the United States, and are aimed at encouraging foreign direct investment. Investors not only have a chance to invest, but assuming they meet the stringent due diligence, receive citizenship of the country, which allows them visa free access to more than 100 countries.

This is Range Development's second project in the Caribbean, following the launch of the Park Hyatt St. Kitts, due to open within the coming months. Park Hyatt St. Kitts is employing more than 600 people during construction, and has been described by Dr. Timothy Harris, Prime Minister of St. Kitts and Nevis, as "a model development for the country."





## Month-long Camp Grooms Young Caribbean Scientists

One month ago, 17-year-old Jamaican students Arianna Stephenson and Emmanuel Sylvester didn't know much about building a wind turbine, or developing and programming an underwater robot. Today, not only can they do both of these things, but they can also program a computer game, and speak Mandarin.

That's because Arianna and Emmanuel recently took part in the 2016 Student Program for Innovation in Science and Engineering (SPiSE), which ran from July 16 to August 13 at the Cave Hill Campus of the University of the West Indies. Their participation was sponsored by the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB).

Now in its fifth year, the annual SPiSE program put on by the Caribbean Science Foundation, aims to groom the region's next generation of leaders in science, technology, and engineering. For one month, students from around the Caribbean are immersed in an intensive program of study, doing university-level courses in robotics, electronics, computer programming, and Mandarin, among others.

"We're very happy to once again support SPiSE, as we believe that science, technology, and engineering are critical to the Caribbean's economic growth and development. Through this program, talented students from across the region are given the opportunity to develop their skills in a number of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics areas. We hope that this will in turn encourage them to pursue careers in these areas, and by doing so, contribute to economic growth and development in the Caribbean," said Yvette Lemonias-Seale, Vice President, Corporate Services and Bank Secretary, CDB.

On Friday, August 13, students got the opportunity to demonstrate to their parents, friends, and sponsors what they had learned over the four weeks. As part of their final project presentations, students showed off their newly-acquired Mandarin language and dance skills, presented computer games that they had developed and programmed themselves, and demoed wind turbines made out of PVC pipes, and robots that could move underwater.

For Sylvester, the SPiSE experience gave him the opportunity to learn new skills. "I've never done computer programming before and I thought that was a lot of fun; it wasn't as hard as I thought it would be, but it was a lot of fun because when they gave you the problem and you can get your code to work that was a good feeling. I also enjoyed robotics, that's

something I've never done before either and I also learned Mandarin for the first time," he said.

Stephenson noted that SPiSE has further cemented her love for science, and helped her to decide on possible future career prospects. "I'm certain of science now... it has also inspired me to do something in biochemistry. I've never liked biology, but when I was learning 'biochem' I realized that this is so much more interesting!" she said.

SPiSE is led by Professor Cardinal Warde of MIT, and is modeled after the well-known and highly successful Minority Introduction to Engineering and Science (MITES) program at MIT, for which Warde



has served as the faculty director for over 15 years. All post-SPiSE students also have the opportunity to be assisted with their college applications, and to participate in research internships in the Caribbean and abroad.

There were 19 participants in the 2016 program, hailing from Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, St. Lucia, Dominica, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Guyana, and Martinique. It is the first time that a student from the French-speaking Caribbean has participated in the program.



## Training Exercise Held for CARICOM's Primary Disaster Relief Unit

Thirty-two participants from the disciplined forces, including police, military and fire services, successfully completed four days of training in preparation for their role in providing relief and humanitarian assistance in the event of a disaster. The annual training workshop of the CARICOM Disaster Relief Unit (CDRU) was held at the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency's (CDEMA) headquarters in Barbados from August 8 to 12, 2016. The training was facilitated by CDEMA in collaboration with the Regional Security System Headquarters (RSS HQ) with funding from the US government through the US Southern Command. The CDRU is one of the specialized teams trained by CDEMA each year as part of the Regional Response Mechanism (RRM).

The RRM is coordinated by CDEMA to provide humanitarian and technical support in a timely manner if requested by any of the CDEMA's 18 participating states.

The system is extremely dependent on the readiness and willingness of the governments of participating states, regional institutions, key development partners, agencies of the United Nations, and humanitarian partners to work together in offering immediate assistance when the call comes from the CDEMA Coordinating Unit.

From 1992 -2015, the Regional Response Mechanism has been in action 17 times and in several instances to multiple islands at the same time. The response has been to disasters resulting from volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, and weather related events.

In his feature address at the closing ceremony, Ronald Jackson, Executive Director of CDEMA said, "I am very proud of what we have accomplished together, not just this week but over the past 25 years of CDERA's/CDEMA's existence. Whilst many were talking about civil/military cooperation and coordination, the CARICOM Community under the leadership of CDEMA and in partnership with the RSS and the region's military, security, and fire chiefs were actually actively doing it. The significance of the RRM and the CDRU should not be understated. There is real capacity in the region to assist our participating states," he added.

The CDRU comprises military, fire, and police assets drawn from the 18 CDEMA participating states. The Unit is deployed to provide humanitarian assistance in direct support to the civil authorities of any state affected by natural or technological hazards. The CDRU's mission is to conduct disaster response and

relief operations and its main tasks include the management of relief supplies, emergency telecommunications, and the provision of appropriate personnel for repairing critical lifeline facilities.

The four-day training included introductions to disaster management, national disaster management and the National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC), introductions to the Regional Supply Tracking System (RSTS), incident command system, urban search and rescue in CDEMA participating states, dignity and human rights, and civil/military coordination.



The training concluded with a field training exercise that allowed the Unit to perform their specific roles in a hazard impact scenario with bases established at the airport and sea port. The field exercise setting allowed for the various phases of operations to be tested – from alert to deactivation.

The CDRU is activated, mobilized, and deployed by the Regional Security System's Central Liaison Office (RSS/CLO) in consultation with and on behalf of CDEMA. Its operations are guided by the CDRU operational plan, standing operating procedures and a memorandum of understanding between CDEMA and the RSS.



## AT A GLANCE

**WHO:** Caribbean Water and Wastewater Association (CWWA)

**WHAT:** The preeminent Association of professionals and practitioners for water and waste sectors in the Caribbean

**WHERE:** Based in Trinidad, W.I.

**WEBSITE:** [www.cwwa.net](http://www.cwwa.net)

# Caribbean Water and Wastewater Association

*Handling unique water and waste challenges in the Islands*

The Caribbean Water and Wastewater Association (CWWA) is a regional, non-governmental organization established by an Act of Parliament in Trinidad & Tobago in 1991. Originally formed by a group of engineers, the initial purpose was to leverage the experience of water and wastewater experts throughout the Caribbean. One key aspect being considered at the time was whether they could become a certifying body for engineers in the water sector; providing the consistency required to establish guidelines for certification of

professional engineers in the region.

Over time, the Association's scope expanded to represent water, wastewater, and solid waste professionals from public and private sectors. Today, CWWA membership includes not only engineers, but practitioners, scientists, technicians, policy developers – anyone involved with water and waste management.

Their mission is clear and commendable: CWWA

brings together the Caribbean water and sanitation community for the protection of public health and the promotion of sustainable development. Through collective leadership, the Association positively influences advancements in technology, education, science, management, and country and regional policies in the water and sanitation field.

While the primary focus has been on water and wastewater, the CWWA now deals with a third component; solid waste and waste management. Support of ongoing education and training in water supply, wastewater, and solid waste disposal, ensures an availability of skilled manpower and well-informed members of the public. The Association also encourages research and development in the water and waste sector, and publication of the results, to further the goal of technological advances in the Caribbean.

## Conquering unique challenges

CWWA President, Jason Johnson, emphasizes that there are unique characteristics of water management in the Caribbean. "People assume, since we are all part of the same region, that all the problems are the same," he says. "That is not the case. We have water scarcities in some areas and flooding issues in others. All manner of things being influenced by climate change, by agricultural factors, by even the most conventional issues, like water mains that have been in use for decades and decades."

To best handle distinct regional differences, the CWWA has designated national sections. Larger islands including Jamaica, Barbados, Trinidad, and Grenada each have one national section. Some of the smaller islands have sub-regional sections, giving them the ability to interact with one another. For example: Guadeloupe and Martinique are part of a French section; Saint Lucia and Dominica are part of another. As small islands, they are able to share input on their needs, even though they may not have enough attendance to sustain a national section.

The CWWA, itself, is comprised of the Executive Director, Executive Assistant, Executive Board, President, two Vice Presidents, two member representatives, Secretary, Treasurer, and Public Relations specialist. Membership stands at approximately 400, in total, divided into four categories:

**General member:** a practitioner in the sector, either with a major corporation or as an individual. Representative could be a professional who works for a private company, or someone who works under the Ministry – whether for an actual utility, or in a policy position related to a particular Ministry.

**Professional Perspectives**” is a CWWA-sponsored lecture series focusing on issues of importance to water and waste management entities in the Islands. A recent offering called “Rainwater in the Caribbean: Opportunities and Challenges” addressed the serious implications of ongoing water shortages. Educational presentations such as these, given by renowned experts, bring a wealth of insight and information to CWWA members and their respective communities.

### Communication Builds Rapport

This year, the association celebrates its 25th anniversary, and exciting plans are in the works to mark the



**Corporate members:** individual companies that usually exhibit in the annual CWWA Conference.

**Associate members:** students, or people on the periphery with semi-involvement in the sector, but not necessarily full, active involvement.

**Utilities:** Some utilities prefer instead to join Cari-WOP (Caribbean Water Operators’ Partnership) – a partner of CWWA in training programs. Though the CWWA is much broader in scope, it provides support to WOP members, as well.

Seminars and workshops foster awareness of new developments in water supply and waste disposal. “Pro-

essional Perspectives” is a CWWA-sponsored lecture series focusing on issues of importance to water and waste management entities in the Islands. A recent offering called “Rainwater in the Caribbean: Opportunities and Challenges” addressed the serious implications of ongoing water shortages. Educational presentations such as these, given by renowned experts, bring a wealth of insight and information to CWWA members and their respective communities.

Johnson notes, “The conference will feature workshops, professional forums, technical presentations, training sessions, an awards ceremony, and a full exhibition hall of vendors and service suppliers, showcasing the latest technology, and promoting their products and services. There is also a social aspect of the conference that’s about the distinctiveness of all the different Caribbean communities. The venue provides an exceptional opportunity for regional bodies to meet and helps them build rapport.”

The monthly CWWA Newsletter, “INFOstructure,” is dis-

tributed by email to all members, and online “Sector News” keeps them informed and up-to-date on current regional and international developments. The association has grown to realize the value of websites, email blasts, and social media as vital communication tools for connecting with their membership, and reaching out to others in the water and waste management sector.

On the advocacy front, Johnson explains the essential role played by CWWA. “We communicate with all the regional Ministers of government, to help advise them on topics related to water management. We put them

CWWA is also working with the Global Water Partnership alliance to share perspective between Caribbean water utilities and those in North and South America. A major initiative, right now, is establishing a partnership with the American Water Works Association (AWWA), aimed towards improving the water management process in Haiti.

The Caribbean water sector is in the midst of significant change. Much of the infrastructure was developed in colonial times, and the needs and expense for operation of the water management systems have increased substantially. Investigation is ongoing regard-



in touch with relevant tech experts, policy developers, researchers, so the Ministries can make more effective decisions.”

### Future prospects

Recently, the CWWA has signed some memoranda of understanding with its sister organization, the Pacific Water and Wastewater Association. PWWA is comprised of small countries, including Samoa, American Samoa, and Guam that are tasked with water management in their regions and are keen to share information. Johnson says, “We will be working more with them in the future, benchmarking small utilities and learning how climate resiliency is being applied in the Pacific sector in contrast to the Caribbean sector.”

ing appropriate regional applications that are in the conceptualization and engineering stages.

“We are able to share that information,” says Johnson. “That’s our greatest value to members – as a resource to share perspective, applications, and solutions that are then applied in a regional context to deal with our changing environment. This includes everything from the increasing costs of water waste management, to handling and disposal of old electronics. We are the preeminent voice associated with the unique perspectives of Caribbean communities, and how they are handling various challenges given the limited resources of small developing islands and small developing economies.”



# The Water Authority of the Cayman Islands

*Supplier of the island's water*

“This is a small island,” says Tom van Zanten, Deputy Director of the Water Authority of the Cayman Islands, “and traditionally, most residents collected rainwater or used fresh groundwater from individual wells. However, the availability of fresh groundwater on Grand Cayman was limited in extent and, due to over-usage and pollution, became even scarcer. By the early 1980s, with the surge in tourism, and commercial and residential developments, there was an increased demand for a reliable source of clean water.”

To respond to this need, the government of the Cayman Islands formed the Water and Sewerage Project Office in 1981. Its mission was to create a plan for a single body with the responsibility for all water-related matters in the country, plus the capability of providing the necessary public facilities to achieve that aim. In early 1983, the Water and Sewerage Project Office presented its plan to the government, and soon thereafter, the Water Authority of the Cayman Islands was established as a statutory body with the passage of the Water Authority Law.

## The Authority exists in order:

- To ensure that the entire population of the Cayman Islands have access to a pure, wholesome, and affordable supply of potable water; and to regulate other entities who are licensed by the Government to provide public water supplies.
- To protect and develop groundwater resources for the benefit of present and future populations of these islands.
- To provide for the collection, treatment and disposal of sewage within these islands in a manner that is safe, efficient and affordable.
- To operate in such a manner as to be financially self-sufficient, while contributing to the economy of these islands and achieving a reasonable and acceptable return on capital investments.

The Water Authority's first major projects were the commissioning of the Lower Valley and East End well fields and reservoirs, which provided treated fresh groundwater to water trucking companies for distribution to residential and commercial customers. “But

## AT A GLANCE

**WHO:** The Water Authority of the Cayman Islands

**WHAT:** A statutory body providing water and sewer services for the Cayman Islands

**WHERE:** Headquarters in George Town, Grand Cayman

**WEBSITE:** [www.waterrauthority.ky](http://www.waterrauthority.ky)

we were going through such rapid development that it was pretty clear, very early on, that the ground water resources would not be adequate,” says van Zanten. “So, we looked at desalination as a method to provide potable water.”

At first, the Authority used waste heat from the local electricity company to produce the desalinated sea wa-



*Management Team: From left, Customer Service Manager Joanna Welcome-Martinez, Deputy Director Tom van Zanten, Director Gelia Frederick-van Genderen, Chief Human Resources Manager Patricia Bell, Information Systems Manager John Bodden, Financial Controller Lori Bergman, and Water Resources Engineer Hendrick-Jan van Genderen.*



ter. Then, in the late '80s, it started to operate its first reverse osmosis plant. "Sea water reverse osmosis (SWRO) technology had been around since the 1960s, but it had a limited track record on a large scale compared to the then more commonly used thermal desalination processes," says van Zanten. "There were seawater reverse osmosis plants throughout the Caribbean for developments, but we were one of the first to use it for island-wide supply. Initially it was a very small plant – 60,000 gallons a day to bridge us to the time that a larger plant was operational. And we have been using seawater, reverse osmosis throughout, not only on this island but also on our sister island of Cayman Brac." In its early days, van Zanten says that one of the biggest drawbacks of SWRO was its high energy

costs. "But as a result of some good developments in regards to membrane technology and energy recovery, the costs have come down, considerably," he reports. "It's still expensive, but it's a lot better than it was 25 or 30 years ago."

The island's water distribution system continued to be extended, and by 2008, piped water was available to nearly all residents of Grand Cayman, either via the Water Authority's water distribution system, or via the (much smaller) water distribution system owned by Cayman Water Company, a private company operating under a license from the Government. "Close to a hundred percent of the island is hooked up to the system," van Zanten says.

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On Grand Cayman, the Water Authority currently owns four RO plants, two of which are located in George Town and have capacities of 5,000 and 6,000 cubic meters per day. Another, in Lower Valley, operates at 3,000 cubic meters per day, and the North Side plant produces 9,000 cubic meters per day. The water produced by these RO plants is stored in 8 reservoirs, which have a total storage capacity of 51,100 m3 or 13.5 million US gallons. The Water Authority's Grand Cayman Water Distribution system presently comprises 300 miles of pipe work, varying in size between 3 inches and 16 inches.

"In Cayman Brac, it's a little different," van Zanten says. "It's a smaller island with about 2,000 people. We started there with a small RO plant and a very small distribution system in 1991. The rest of the island was covered by five water trucks that we own and operate. Historically, it was about 50 percent pipeline,

50 percent trucks. And that lasted for quite some time. Two years ago, we started expanding our distribution system in Cayman Brac and, hopefully, in about ten or twelve years' time, we'll have that entire island covered with piped water, as well.

"There's also a small island, Little Cayman, which has only a few hundred permanent residents who rely on tourism, and we will have a small plant on that island as well and we will truck the water to various customers, because, based on the number of customers we would have there, and the size of the island, it isn't economically feasible to provide piped water to that island."

Regarding wastewater, in 1988, the Water Authority completed the construction of the West Bay Beach Sewerage System, which provided for the collection of wastewater from the main tourist area along Seven

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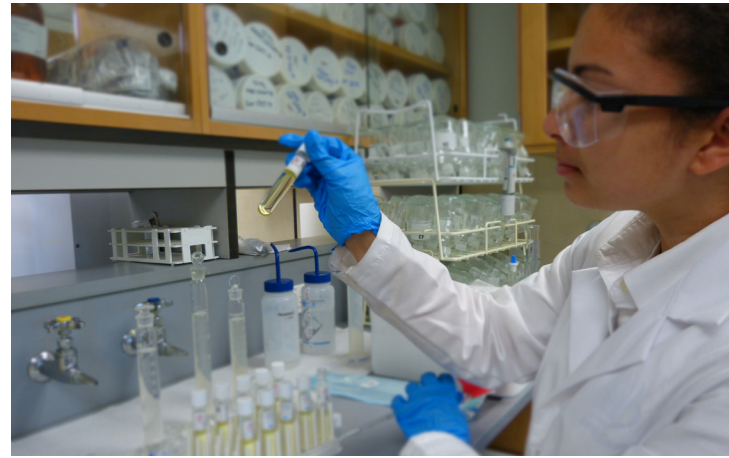
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Mile Beach. The original facility consisted of four, large, waste stabilization ponds. “But since 2005, we have a Sequencing Batch Reactor plant with a capacity of 2.5 million gallons a day, and that’s actually the first phase out of four; it’s designed to ultimately treat 10 million gallons a day,” van Zanten states. “So, hopefully, in the future, we’ll expand our collection system. Our mandate dictates that we’ll have to do that. But it’s going to be a gradual process.”

Other items on the Authority’s immediate and ongoing agenda include a new water distribution pump station in George Town equipped with variable frequency drives that adjust the speed of the pump motor to fit the water demand at any given time, thus saving energy and money; the installation of bulk water meters at strategic places, where the net inflow of water can be compared against water sales; and the replacement of older water meters to ensure that all water used by

customers can be properly and accurately registered. “The next step would be to go to smart meters,” says van Zanten. AMI (Advanced Metering Infrastructure) uses wireless water meters that send data on water use from each customer to a central monitoring location. “The system is capable of logging the water usage and alerting the Water Authority if a customer has a sudden or unusual spike in water usage (either in real time or using historical data, in the event of a customer dispute), or if there are localized low pressure areas, which are possible indicators of a leak.

This could help the Water Authority identify the location of pipe breaks, allowing for quicker repairs and less lost water,” say van Zanten. “It will give us a lot more data, our customers can see their own usage to see if there’s anything amiss, and we can do the same thing. Plus, our staff won’t have to go out and operate a valve.”



Since its inception, the Water Authority of the Cayman Islands has come a long way in fulfilling its mission. “In the last 30 years, we achieved a lot,” says Deputy Director, van Zanten. “We went from a small, government department with half a dozen people, to an organization of more than 120 employees that is self-sufficient, provides good quality water to the majority of the population, provides wastewater collection and treatment services, and protects the water resources of the island for future generations.”

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## AT A GLANCE

**WHO:** The National Water Commission of Jamaica

**WHAT:** The main provider of potable water supply, and the collection, treatment and disposal of wastewater services in Jamaica

**WHERE:** Kingston, Jamaica

**WEBSITE:** [www.nwcjamaica.com](http://www.nwcjamaica.com)

supplies more than a half million of those persons with wastewater services, as well. Approximately 73 percent of Jamaica's population is supplied via house connections from the National Water Commission and the remaining 27 percent obtains water from standpipes, water trucks, wayside tanks, community catchment tanks, rainwater catchment tanks, and direct access to rivers and streams.

Approximately 30 percent of Jamaica's population is served by sewerage facilities operated by the NWC. This includes some small sewerage systems, utilizing package plants, which are associated with housing developments in various locations throughout the country. The disposal of the sewage generated in the remainder of the population is done through various types of on-site systems such as septic tanks, soak-away pits, tile fields and pit latrines, or other systems operated by other entities.

The NWC operates more than 1,000 water supply,

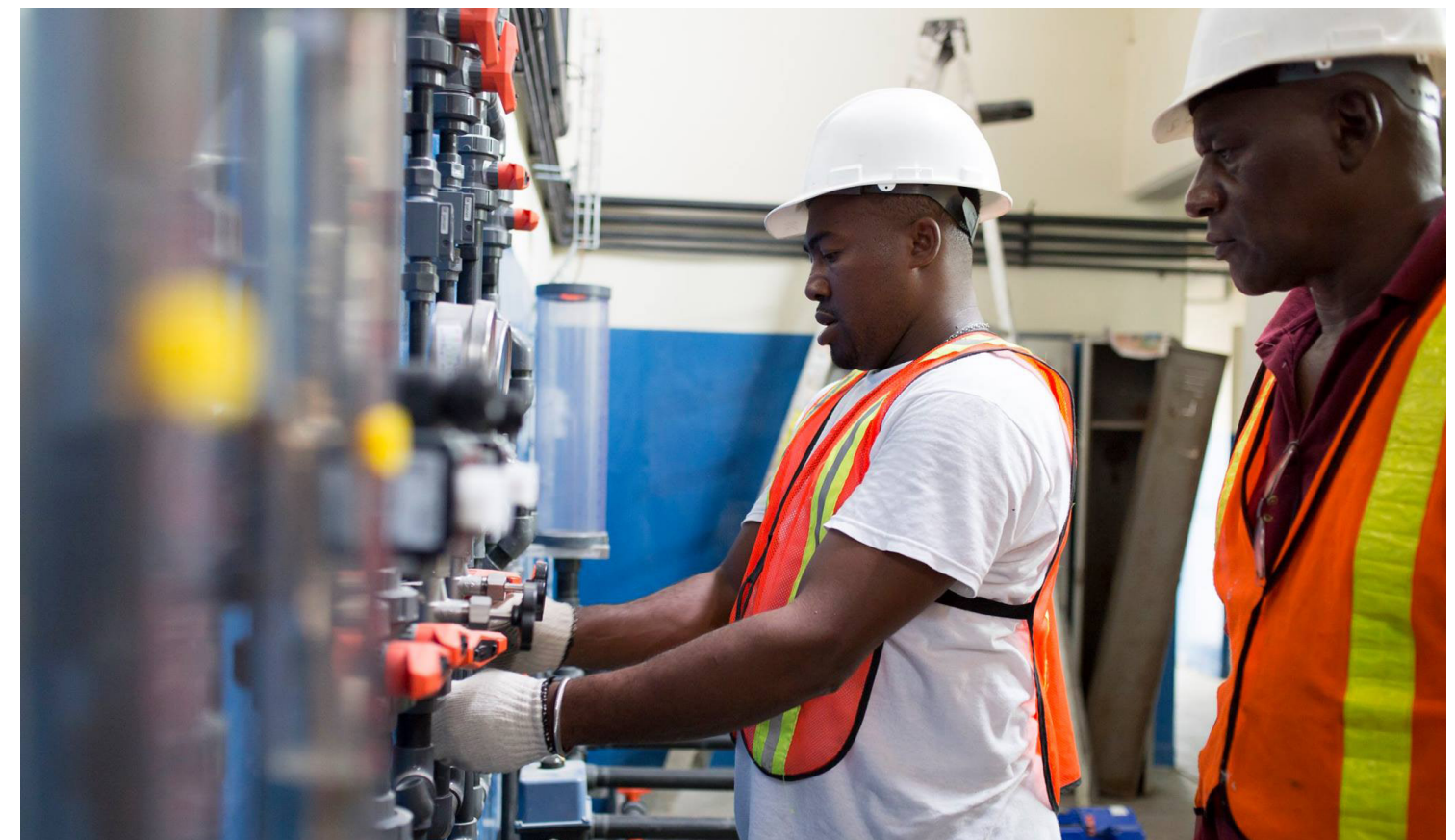
and over 100 sewerage facilities, islandwide. These vary from large raw water storage reservoirs at Hermitage and Mona in St. Andrew and the Great River treatment plant in St. James, to medium sized and small diesel-driven pumping installations serving rural towns and villages across Jamaica. The NWC facilities also include over 10,000 kilometers of pipelines and more than 1,000 kilometers of sewer mains across

# The National Water Commission of Jamaica

*Serving you in so many ways*

The National Water Commission (NWC) was formally established in 1980, under the auspices of the National Water Commission Act. "Prior to 1980, there were two main organizations responsible for the provision of water supplies and sewage services throughout the island," explains Mark Barnett, the NWC's President since 2015, "the Kingston and St. Andrew Water Commission and the more rurally focused, National Water Authority. In 1980, there was an amalgamation of the two entities to form the National Water Commission." While it is not the only service provider in the coun-

try - there are a few private and quasi-governmental operations ongoing - the National Water Commission is charged with the responsibility of being the main provider of potable water supply, and the collection, treatment and disposal of wastewater services to the people of Jamaica. Today, the NWC produces more than 90 percent of the country's potable water from a network of more than 160 underground wells, over 116 river sources (via water treatment plants), and 147 springs. It produces 180 million imperial gallons of potable water a day for over two million persons and





the island. The NWC's operating expenses are paid for via user fees. "We don't get support from the government," says Barnett, "unless there's a specific project that government wants us to do, then they will provide us with some capital resources, but, in general, the revenue we earn is what takes care of our operating expense and loan portfolio. In other words, we try to be as self-sufficient as possible."

The NWC operates within the policy context of the Government of Jamaica's goal of universal access to potable water by the year 2025 and the establishment of sewerage systems in all major towns by 2020. This presents a serious challenge for the NWC because proper water supply and wastewater services are highly involved, complex, and costly - particularly in Jamaica where the need to pump water to and from remote areas over hilly terrain incurs very high electricity bills.

According to Barnett, Jamaica also suffers from a high amount of water loss, or what is known as non-reve-



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early stage was very low. We did not invest as much as we should.”

Barnett believes that controlling water loss is one of the NWC’s main challenges, and that solving that problem will lower the agency’s costs, considerably. “I consider the reduction of water loss as a new supply,” he says. “Meaning, if I can reduce my losses from the water that I already produced and distributed, then I’ll be able to add more customers and encourage more development because more water is readily available. And the agency can become more efficient just by tackling one major problem. So, that is where my main focus is, because there is a direct correlation between high NRW and high energy costs.”

Barnett’s spotlight on saving money is based on his desire that the NWC could become, someday, profitable enough to be a contributor to the government’s

nue water (NRW). One reason is due to the country’s aging infrastructure and another is because of non-payment of bills and/or pilfering of water resources by segments of the population. “That is what we are now grappling with,” says Barnett, ruefully. “We have high physical losses in our network – we have infrastructure that is probably more than a hundred years old - coupled with the fact that we have dispersed communities that are socially and economically challenged, creating its own challenges for the enterprise to bill and collect for water that we produce and distribute in some of those areas.”

Regarding the NWC’s infrastructure, Barnett admits that the level of investment undertaken when it was first formed was far below what it should have been, based on the system’s expected utilization. “When we were established in 1980, there was no real capitalization of the enterprise to renew its assets,” he states. “And, therefore, we were only able to invest as the resources came available. So, investment in the





the various sectors that the government is targeting – tourism cannot flourish without a reliable supply of water; certain industries are unlikely to survive without a reliable source of water. So, we consider ourself the backbone of, if not the main ingredient for, national development, because water touches all spheres. Water is really what determines the health of the nation and the level of development that can take place in a country.”

And that is why the motto of Jamaica’s National Water Commission is “Serving You in so Many Ways.”

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offers. “We want to become a financially viable entity and be a net earner for the government,” he declares. He also likes to think about ways that the agency can expand its revenue stream, such as bottling water and competing with private sector companies in that arena. “Since our water has a more superior quality and taste than some that is already on the market,” he asserts. “So there are opportunities that we could look at. But first, the agency has to make sure that the supply of water is reliable and then we can venture into other areas and do those value-added projects.”

Meanwhile, Barnett insists that clean water, in and of itself, is still one of Jamaica’s most valuable “currencies,” and providing it to as many residents, businesses, and tourists, as possible, it is key for the country’s future growth. “Our vision is to contribute positively to national development,” he asserts. “We want to ensure that the residents have access to regular, high-quality, potable water, and secondly, we want to ensure that the services that we provide encourage investment in

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# The Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association

*Serving and representing the hotel and tourism industry in the Caribbean region*

Recently, Business View Magazine talked with Frank Comito, the CEO and Director General of the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA). The following is a transcript of a wide-ranging discussion that touched on many issues and activities in which the Association is engaged:

**BVM: Can you give me some background on the history of the Association and how it may have changed and grown over the years?**

“The Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association was originally called the Caribbean Hotel Association. It was founded in 1962, as part of a federation of national hotel and tourism associations in the region at

that time. And we continue, to this day, being a federation of 32 national hotel and tourism associations with all of our respective memberships drawing from that number, as well as individual members we garner from international sources. It was founded, originally, to help market the industry and to work collaboratively on issues that affect its ability to drum up business. So a lot of its emphasis, in the early stages, was on marketing. But as time evolved, in the late ‘70s, ‘80s, and early ‘90s, its mission expanded into other areas, in particular: advocacy, research and information dissemination, workforce development, and overall product development. And that expanded mission continues to today.

“About ten years ago, the Caribbean Hotel Association changed its name to the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association, in recognition of the broad reach that tourism has on the economies of the Caribbean. Over the years, we’ve also established a few related organizations and institutions, including the CHTA Education Foundation, which has awarded over \$5 million worth of scholarships to the region’s residents and has played an integral part in human resource development. We also established a group called the Caribbean Society of Hotel Association Executives, which is geared towards supporting the professional development and the coordination amongst the various national hotel association executives – information sharing, best practices, and strengthening the two-way links between the national hotel and tourism associations and CHTA. We also had a spin-off organization called the Caribbean Alliance for Sustainable Tourism in the late 1990s, which focuses primarily on encouraging sustainable tourism practices. It’s the umbrella for energy efficiency projects that we’ve done, energy efficiency policies that we’ve advanced, best practices

## AT A GLANCE

**WHO:** The Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association

**WHAT:** Serving and representing the hotel and tourism industry in the Caribbean region

**WHERE:** Coral Gables, Florida, USA

**WEBSITE:** [www.caribbeanhotelassociation.com](http://www.caribbeanhotelassociation.com)

on environmental standards, and so on.”

**Can you elaborate on the Association’s advocacy responsibilities and activities?**

“It’s an ongoing challenge to make sure that our policies regionally, as well as in individual countries, are conducive to advancing the growth, development,



Caribbean National Team - WINNER – Bahamas (left to right): In photo: Emil Lee, CHTA President; Frank Comito, CHTA CEO; Team Bahamas (Jamal Small, Charon McKenzie, Sheldon Tracey Sweeting, Richmond Fowler II, Marv Cunningham, Crystal Morley); Peter Olsacher, Judge.



Chef of the Year - WINNER Puerto Rico (left to right): Frank Comito, CHTA CEO; Emil Lee, CHTA President; Jonathan Hernandez, Team Puerto Rico, 2015 Caribbean Chef of the Year; Peter Olsacher, Judge.



Chef of the Year - WINNER Puerto Rico (left to right): Frank Comito, CHTA CEO; Emil Lee, CHTA President; Jonathan Hernandez, Team Puerto Rico, 2015 Caribbean Chef of the Year; Peter Olsacher, Judge.

and profitability of the industry, and recognizing that it's the primary employment generator of tax revenue for the region. That's not necessarily acknowledged in practice by many governments in the region, and we've worked hard with our counterpart organization, the Caribbean Tourism Organization, which represents government interests in the tourism industry, to provide information and facts about its economic impact. We've worked closely with the World Travel and Tourism Council and groups like Oxford Economics to garner and support the development of the necessary research to show the broad economic impact of tourism in our various jurisdictions in the Caribbean. That's been absolutely necessary because we're faced constantly with issues of high taxation and high costs of doing business in the Caribbean, which have corresponding effects on our rates and our profitability. We have to be on top of that all of the time and work hard to make sure governments are aware of how policies and regulatory matters affect our industry. So, advocacy plays a very key role in everything that we do. We operate under seven guiding strategy objectives and

right in there is advocacy and representation."

**You also mentioned research and the dissemination of information as part of the Association's mission. Any recent initiatives in that area?**

"We've done research and position papers on the lifting of the U.S. embargo on Cuba and offered some positive and constructive ways in which individual jurisdictions in the region can address the impending changes. We're finalizing an advocacy paper, right now, on the sharing economy – groups like Uber and AirBnB – and how they may be effectively integrated into the industry with standards, regulations, and some fair play on taxation, to not only protect the reputation of the industry, but also to help to develop that subsector of the accommodations sector, as well.

**The Zika virus has been in the news lately and it's realistic to think that it will have an impact on travel and tourism in the region. How has the Association responded?**

We've been working for the past four weeks on the

Zika virus situation, which has required some advocacy and outreach. It's been a coordinated effort, a partnership effort between the public and private sectors, working in collaboration with the regional umbrella group, called CARPHA, the Caribbean Public Health Agency organization that represents ministries of health throughout the Caribbean. We've been working diligently on education, training, getting the right kind of information out there – mitigation and effective control techniques - and looking at it not only from the hotel and tourism industry's point of view, but looking at it as a broader collaborative response by governments, communities, and our industry in the private sector, in dealing with a matter that, if it's not handled as well as it could, might have broad consequences on our economies and our industry, and, quite frankly, the social health and welfare of the residents of the Caribbean.

**Can you talk a little about the nuts and bolts of the Association? Who are your members and are their different tiers of membership?**

We're a federation of national hotel and tourism associations, so the region's national hotel and tourism associations are members. We also have over 600 hotel members from the Caribbean and another 400 allied members, both within the Caribbean as well as external partners – tour operators, wholesalers, airlines, people who do business with the tourism industry, even banks and other kinds of financial institutions. We also have what we call partner organizations that we work with like the Florida-Caribbean Cruise Association; the Caribbean and Central American Action, based out of Washington; the Caribbean Council, based out of the United Kingdom; and IATA, the International Air Transport Association. So we have a number of affiliated memberships, which are really reciprocal memberships – there's quite a few of those.

**What kind of events do you hold for your members?**

"We have four key events throughout the year. We just completed our annual marketing event called Caribbean Travel Marketplace, which was held in the Baha-



mas and had over a thousand participants. That's the region's premier gathering to do business. We bring suppliers- suppliers being the hotels throughout the region, some of the local tour operators, attractions, and providers - together with buyers, which include, primarily, leading tour operators and wholesalers from around the world, for two days of intense appointments for buying, selling, negotiating, making new contacts, and so on. We have an education component layered in that's very much directed to sales and marketing kinds of training and support, and this year, we also had 14 ministers or heads of tourism in governments throughout the Caribbean join us. So, that's the primary event.

"We also do an event called CHIEF, the Caribbean Hospitality Industry Exchange Forum, which is very much professional development and education-oriented. We started that event last October in Puerto Rico and it was very successful - the feedback was terrific. In that, we have household names from every kind of company imaginable doing workshops and seminars for our people, and a buying element for our allied members with a tradeshow component to it. We'll be

repeating that again, this year, in the same location, the first couple of days in October.

"We also do an event called "Taste of the Caribbean." We've been doing that for over 20 years. It's held in Miami and is a combination of a couple of things, including a competitive culinary event for the chefs. We have chefs from national teams throughout the Caribbean who come together for three days of intense competition for the rights of calling themselves the Caribbean Culinary Team of the Year, the Chef of the Year, the Pastry Chef of the Year, the Bartender of the Year. It follows international standards in judging and there's a range of awards that are offered. Woven around that event are several other related events, showcasing culinary and cultural aspects of the Caribbean. We have education sessions for professional development for chefs, and food and beverage managers, and other personnel in the F & B industry. And we also have a consumer component, where the public's invited, called "Taste of the Islands." It's a Caribbean tapas event with music and festive atmosphere. We have various countries throughout the Caribbean showcasing some of their best, national dishes.

"The fourth signature event that we have is the Caribbean Hotel Investment Conference and Operations Summit that's held in November. That's done primarily by a company called HVS and we, along with the Caribbean Tourism Organization, are host sponsors, as well. Those make up the bulk of our major activities and events."

**How else do you communicate with the membership?**

"We probably communicate with them about four or five times a week. We try to balance it so we don't over-communicate, but we have various ways. We do webinars, email, and social media. At our Caribbean Travel Marketplace, we had over nine million social media hits on that event; it was quite exciting to see that kind of engagement."

**The Great Recession harmed tourism pretty much everywhere, but particularly in the Caribbean. What does the landscape look like for the industry over the next several years, and how do you see the Association continuing to be a viable voice for the sector?**

"We just completed our first annual 'Industry Performance and Outlook Study.' The findings really showed that we're continuing on an upward path that started about three years ago for the region as an aggregate. Some destinations did okay during the Recession, some struggled quite a bit, and some came out of it earlier than others. Collectively, the region really came out of it about three years ago, and we've seen a good upward trend line. More than half the hotels reported strong to moderate performance in 2015. With increased occupancies and arrivals, most hotels also increased their employment rolls. So there was some robust hiring, last year.

"Also, one of the things that happened during the Recession is we saw a retrenchment in capital expenditures. We're starting to see people coming out of that, and last year, they came out of it quite significantly. So, capital expenditures and investments in hotel properties were up, last year, and are projected to increase in 2016. The profit picture is a little unsettling, yet, in part because of people still struggling. There are a lot of back payments and things that were put on hold. And because of the Recession, we were not able to





CHTA New Executive Team (left to right): Emil Lee, President, CHTA; Vanessa Ledesma, COO, CHTA; Frank Comito, CEO, CHTA; Matt Cooper, CMO, CHTA.

move up our ADR, our Average Daily Rate, as quickly as we wanted to as an industry, but we've been seeing it move up four to six points each year over the last two years. Despite improved performance, one third of the hotels reported an anticipated loss in 2015. That's not insignificant, but at the height of the Recession over half of them were reporting that. So we've seen some change, that way.

"90 percent of the hotels characterized the 2015 tourism industry as 'strong to moderate.' And the outlook for 2016 remains positive with some concerns. The outlook wasn't as strong as 2015, but it's still strong. We asked a few questions about those concerns and received comments that categorized a couple of areas – high operating costs, taxation pressures, air lift challenges, and, to a lesser extent, perceptions of crime and safety in the region."

**You mentioned "air lift challenges." Are you alluding to the fact that air travel to the islands is still too expensive for many people?**

We've not engaged some of our key people, including the airline stakeholders, as effectively in recent years. So, part of the mandate we've given ourselves is to reach out to them much more effectively and we're doing that, right now. We've done some research on price



elasticity and at one point we lose market share because of the high cost of airfare. So, one of our goals around advocacy is to reduce the high cost of airfare. One of the major contributors to the high airfare costs to the Caribbean are the high tax levels. Taxes and fees have gone up incredibly in the last several years. The U.S. taxes and fees have pretty much held their own, but, for example, if you buy a ticket to the Bahamas, which is a quick hop from Florida, over 51 percent of the cost of your ticket are taxes and fees. And that translates into most jurisdictions in the Caribbean – they can be quite high. So, when you factor that in, our argument has been that that adds to the increased costs of supply. The airlines' cost have actually held their own or gone down a bit, but it's the taxes and fees that are the big bugaboo, here. So, we started an outreach, working with our Caribbean Tourist Organization, to look at ways we can help to reduce the cost of travel to the region. It's an advocacy initiative that's part of a three-year plan. We won't get it done overnight, but we have done a lot of groundwork, already; we've built some collaborative efforts around it both with the airline industry and with the Caribbean Tour-

ism Organization to help address, not only the costs, but also the ease of travel, as well. It should be much easier than it is.

**To sum up, what are some of the salient points that you would like our readers to take away from an article about the CHTA?**

"The core of the message is that in the Caribbean, tourism is everyone's business. And if people understand better the connection of how it affects everything – the socioeconomic aspect of everything in almost all the destinations in the Caribbean – they can see how we can better connect the dots. We need much more friendly policies and collaborative initiatives to protect and enhance the industry. It's the single quickest way to generate employment and tax revenue for the governments of the Caribbean. Bumping up our arrivals and our occupancies a few points has tremendous value; the tourist dollar has a multiplier effect that touches just about every aspect of life. And the Caribbean Hotel and Tourist Association is an active and engaging partner, working at the local and regional levels to help market, develop, enhance, and protect the



# The Bimini Big Game Club Resort & Marina

*The big game in town*

Bimini in the Bahamas, is comprised of a chain of islands located about 53 miles due east of Miami, and is known as the “Big Game Fishing Capital of the World.” Indeed, according to Robbie Smith, the Dock Master of the Bimini Big Game Club Resort and Marina, the largest fish ever caught in the Bahamas – a 1060 pound blue marlin – was reeled in there in 1979.

The original Bimini Big Game Fishing Club was founded in 1936, by Nassau entrepreneur, Neville Stuart, and quickly began attracting famous people from around

the world, including American author and sportsman, Ernest Hemingway. Originally a formal dining club, with tuxedo and tie as the preferred attire for gentlemen, the club moved to its current location in 1954 with the completion of a marina and six cottages for visitors. In 1963, the main hotel building opened, and some years later, the property was acquired by the Bacardi family, who renovated and operated it for many years.

Today, the Bimini Big Game Club Resort & Marina is owned by the Southern California-based Hankey Group

of Companies. Located in Alice Town on North Bimini, the 3.5-acre property is a boutique style resort with 51 guest rooms and cottages and 75 boat slips. It has recently undergone a \$6 million renovation which included a new, larger freshwater pool, new docks at the full service marina, new landscaping, new furniture for the guest rooms, and a renovation of its most popular restaurant, the Big Game Bar and Grill. In addition, according to General Manager, Larry Williams, the facility is reviving its beachside restaurant, Sharkey’s, by putting in a poolside bar, and is contemplating opening a new restaurant named after Hemingway, himself.

Most of Big Game’s guests come from southeast Florida, followed by Texas, and the northeast U.S. The resort is open all year ‘round and according to Smith, “As long as the weather is good during the season, we’re pretty much full every weekend. During the off-season, it’s weather permitting, because you’ve got to cross the 50 miles of Gulf Stream. But you’re only two hours

## AT A GLANCE

**WHO:** The Bimini Big Game Club Resort & Marina

**WHAT:** A boutique style resort and marina

**WHERE:** Alice Town on North Bimini Island

**WEBSITE:** [www.biggameclubbimini.com](http://www.biggameclubbimini.com)

away by boat and 20 minutes by plane. Bimini is the little getaway.”

While the Bimini Big Game Club Resort & Marina is not the only “game in town,” according to Williams, it’s still the “big game in town.” “We have the Bahamian flavor,” adds Smith, “which is what a lot of tourists come back for. Big Game is the place in town that everybody wants to get to and be able to say ‘Oh, this is Bimini!’”





Now that the Big Game has completed its renovations, Williams expects that its occupancy rate will increase from its current 50 to 60 percent, which will likely help boost the resort's profits. "Since the six years of the current ownership, this is the first year that we made a profit every month," he reports. Williams would also like to augment his staff training agenda and see that they are given certification in several professional areas. Lastly, he says that he hopes that Sharkey's Restaurant, with its new bar, becomes a "hot spot in Bimini for entertainment."

The Bimini Big Game Club Resort & Marina – still the "big game in town."

### PREFERRED VENDOR

**SEACOR Island Lines LLC** - [www.seacorislndlines.com](http://www.seacorislndlines.com)



Williams agrees: "A tourist told me, this morning, if he wants to go to 'Palm Beach,' he'll go to the competition, but if he wants to go to true Bimini, he'll go to Big Game. We market ourselves as a genuine Bimini experience. We're run by an all-Bahamian team. When guests come here, they really feel that they're connecting with family members. We do everything to make them happy."



In addition, Williams says that Big Game is "one of the few small hotels in the Caribbean that is headed by a CHA, a Certified Hospitality Administrator, and has a licensed boat captain as a marina manager." Also, the resort has a joint venture with Neal Watson's Bimini Scuba Center which is located at the Big Game Club, and operates a 55-foot glass bottom dive boat, well-suited to accommodate divers, snorkelers, and sightseers. In addition to reefs, wrecks, and wall diving, the Dive Center offers Great Hammerhead Shark, Wild Dolphin, Reef Shark, and Sting Ray Safaris. PADI certifications and courses are also available.



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## AT A GLANCE

**WHO:** Belize Tourism Industry Association

**WHAT:** Non-profit organization representing the Belize tourism industry

**WHERE:** National Office in Belize City, Belize

**WEBSITE:** [www.btia.org](http://www.btia.org)

ation, Membership Outreach and Development, Communication and Marketing, Lobbying, and Advocacy. Burgos knows the Association inside-out, and gives some interesting insight on the back story:

“In the ‘80s, there was no Ministry of Tourism, no Belize Tourism Board. The main industries at the time were sugar cane, citrus, and banana exports. Tourism was nowhere on the government roster, so a group of individuals established the Belize Tourism Industry Association to be a much-needed voice for hotel owners,

# Belize Tourism Industry Association

*The voice for private sector tourism in paradise*

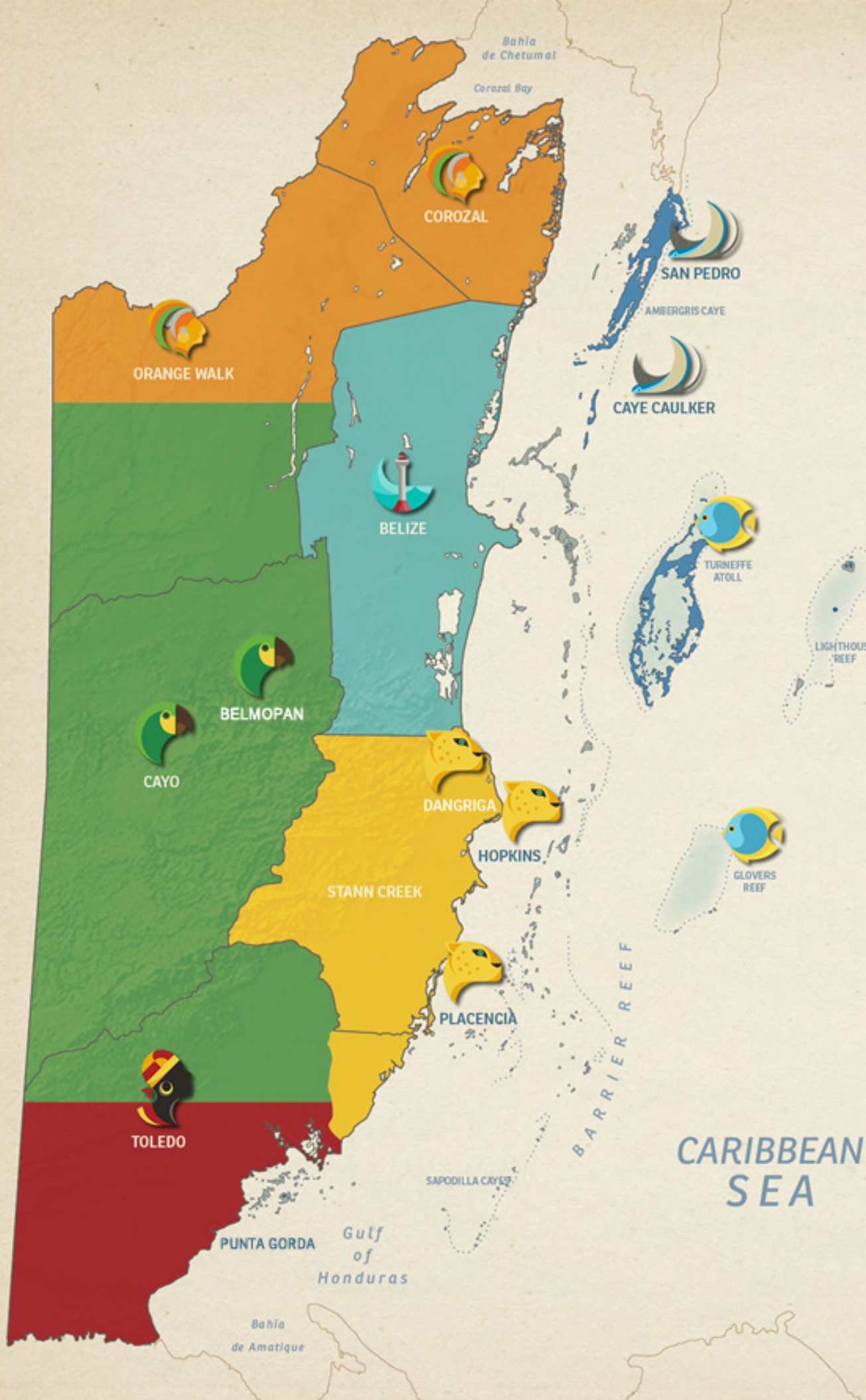
Beautiful Belize. A destination akin to paradise. And a hands-down favorite getaway location for business travelers and pleasure seekers, alike. Three decades ago, when the Belize Tourism Industry Association was created, the tourist industry was in its infancy on the island. Today, with the burgeoning growth and success of all manner of tourism-related enterprises in the region, never-before seen challenges are arising... and the BTIA is one busy and dedicated entity.

In the early 1980s, a group of forward-thinking indi-

viduals saw the huge potential of the tourism industry, and realized the need for a united voice for the private sector. Led by Mrs. Jean Shaw, the group formed the Belize Tourism Industry Association, which was incorporated under the laws of Belize in 1989, and is now one of the country’s largest non-profit organizations.

Executive Director, John Burgos, is responsible for the overall supervision of the BTIA National Secretariat by coordinating and implementing policies and procedures in Governance, Administration, Revenue Gener-





providers of guided fishing tours, trips to the Blue Hole, the Reef... everyone offering services to tourists.”

Officially, “the BTIA is an umbrella organization for the tourism industry’s private sector with a mandate to advocate on behalf of its members for the benefit of the tourism industry by influencing the outcomes of public policy and resource allocation decisions by the government, specifically for tourism.” Today, the Association has representation on almost every government, legislative, advisory, consultative, and licensing committee. As a direct result of BTIA’s advocacy efforts, tourism is front and center on the list of government priorities.

### Member perks

BTIA membership numbers have climbed to 600, covering six categories – three each for Personal and Business members. Burgos notes, “Membership is open to any stakeholder in the tourism industry. Hotel and resort owners, tour operators, tour guides - we even have chocolate companies and artisans that develop souvenirs. Also, any student studying tourism can become a member.”

Benefits well exceed the annual membership fee. They include generous discounts on training, voting at the

AGM, and marketing opportunities such as website listings and reduced advertising rates. In addition, member-to-member discounts from tourism-related companies throughout Belize are especially attractive.

The value of advocacy on behalf of members is priceless. According to Burgos, “We advocate directly for our members on issues that the government sees as important to promoting tourism. Anything that is going to contradict us in any way, we stand up side-by-side with the government to decide the best way forward.” One such issue is the sustainable development of local infrastructure; something the tourism sector touts as crucial to future growth.

The Association is led by a membership-elected Board of Directors that represents all ten BTIA chapters, one from each district, country-wide. Board members elect their own President, who sits for two years. The Secretariat, under Executive Director Burgos, has a permanent staff of three (Event & Marketing Manager, Membership Officer, and Accountant).

### Do you have an app for that?

Tourism is currently the country’s number one sector in terms of revenue generation and employment. Over-





night accommodation numbers have seen increases of 15 to 22 percent monthly from January to July of 2016. The majority of visitors still come from Canada and the US, but European and South American markets are coming on board. Consistent growth is predicted for the future, as more travelers are lured by expanded marketing initiatives to choose Belize as their go-to destination.

BTIA continues to develop projects based on market trends, globalization, and membership needs. One key event is the Belize Tourism Expo (BETEX) that takes place every two years. The upcoming show in May 2017 promises to be the best yet. Burgos says, “We bring travel agents from all over the world to meet with our local tour operators and service providers over a three-day period. This is the only event of its kind in Belize, and reinforces the purpose of the Association to support and provide networking opportunities for our members.”

“Destination Belize” is a signature magazine produced by BTIA, and the only publication featuring a full perspective of the country. Print copies are distributed worldwide through Belize diplomatic offices, and by BTIA Board Members attending international travel and road shows. The Belize Hotel Association assists with national distribution, while BTIA members ensure

the magazine is available at every hotel in the country. “This year, for the first time, we are expanding the Destination Belize marketing platform to promote Belize globally,” says Burgos. “We are producing an electronic version, available by app, as well as a dedicated website just for the magazine. The key factor is to make it accessible to everyone. Keyword-coded technology will make downloading easy and accessible from anywhere.”

BTIA is thrilled to announce that this is the first app to promote Belize as a tourist destination. The official launch of the new website and the online ‘e-book’ edition of Destination Belize is slated for October 3, 2016.

### Open for business!

Belize is a tropical treasure whose time has come. And BTIA is working tirelessly to spread the word. Affiliations with other private sector tourism entities – locally, regionally, and internationally – allow sharing of knowledge and experience. Burgos adds, “We can be beneficial to other countries in similar positions on how to challenge the system and be successful. Anyone interested in visiting or doing business in Belize, feel free to contact BTIA and we can easily align them with our members, based on the needs and services they require.”



## AT A GLANCE

**WHO:** Chabil Mar Resort

**WHAT:** A guest-exclusive, luxury, boutique resort

**WHERE:** Placencia Peninsula, Belize

**WEBSITE:** [www.chabilmarvillas.com](http://www.chabilmarvillas.com)

the peninsula.” Chabil Mar has 19 luxury villas and one honeymoon suite; all have personal verandas, and all are outfitted with Belizean hardwood cabinetry, granite counter tops, marble tiling, and fine linens and bedding. Original art and local artifacts complement the villas’ more modern conveniences, such as air conditioning and wireless internet. The entire Chabil Mar property sits amidst lush tropical gardens and displays with imported plants and flowers from all over Belize that were brought in by the resort’s landscapers and often transplanted in their native soils.

## Chabil Mar Resort – Belize

*Beauty by Belize, luxury by design*

Mayan for “Beautiful Sea,” the Chabil Mar Resort sits at the end of the 16-mile Placencia Peninsula, a gorgeous strip of palm and mango-covered land that borders the clear blue Caribbean Sea at the southeastern tip of Belize. The small, private, guest exclusive, luxury resort opened in 2005. “Placencia was, at that point, getting the attention of the tourism industry in a very different way that it had in previous years,” says co-owner and Director of Sales and Marketing, Larry France.” Up until that time, San Pedro on Ambergris

Caye, in the northeast, was the center of the country’s tourist activity.

“As a result of the attention, the developer chose to put together a property that was more upscale and different than what was being offered,” France continues. “It was developed with a boutique approach in mind – that it would be an all-villa resort, as opposed to a hotel. And the property was selected because of its proximity to the Village of Placencia, at the end of



Chabil Mar began with ten employees and today has 45. “As our inventory grew and occupancy became greater and greater, we added staff in order to cover the essential needs of high-end tourists,” says France. “We had to expand all the food and beverage operations immensely, as well as the front desk and concierge. And, of course, the grounds are something that we had to maintain at a very high level. We expanded the pier so that we could provide lounges for people so they could sun out on the pier, and it gave us more space for dining activities and private reservations. The area that we call Café Mar, which is a decked area right on the beach, seated about 20 people when it was originally built, and we doubled the size of it, so it seats close to 40, with one area carved out as lounge. Last year, we added outdoor showers. We also expanded our bar and lounge area that originally seated just eight people and we expanded it to a seating of 15 and then added a lounge attached to the bar. Those were the major projects.”



France says that Chabil Mar closes down, each year, for the month of October, which, along with September, are the two slowest months for tourism in Belize. But that doesn't mean that the staff goes home; employees are kept on the payroll and shifted into other jobs, including major maintenance work – painting, or rebuilding, or expanding different amenities of the property. “Every two years, we have power-washed all the buildings; repainted them, refinished all the woodwork and wood furniture,” he reports. “Every villa has a personal veranda, so we end up sanding those down and refinishing all of our verandas every other year. Inside the villas, we have various types of tile so we have to clean all the floors and re-polish all of them. So, although we're cleaning every single day with our housekeeping staff, it's important for us to do heavy maintenance once a year.”



Chabil Mar's clientele mirrors that of Belize's overall



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tourism ratios – 75 percent of them come from the U.S.; about 15 percent from Canada; and the rest from the rest of the world, primarily Europe. France tries to capture his share with a three-pronged approach: “First on the list is that we are a luxury property meaning that I would classify us as a four-star property out of five stars,” he states. “But we believe we always deliver five-star service. For instance, when people get to the area airport, we provide round-trip transportation for them. We greet them, not only at the airport, but when they arrive, our staff is out there greeting them with a cool towel and a nice cool drink, and then we give them a private tour of the property. When they arrive in their villa, they have a fresh vase of flowers, a welcome card, chocolates from Belize, and those kinds of things. So, five-star service, is, and always will be, our target.”

“The other thing that we do to differentiate ourselves is that we’re the only resort in Placencia that offers a full-service resort operation, meaning we have a full-service kitchen, bar services, and concierge services right on the property that is reserved for the exclusive use of our guests,” France continues. “There is no other resort that provides those services exclusively to their guests. And even though we’re boutique - so that means that at most, we will have 50 people on the property at any one time - we don’t open our doors to the public for our services. That gives us the ability to enhance the services that we provide because we’re completely focused on the clients. Our staff is trained and expected to know when anybody arrives on the property, and everybody in the service area knows them by name before they even arrive. Everybody greets them by their name throughout their stay from the very first time they step foot on the property.

And that guest-service exclusivity is something that we market that completely distinguishes us from the other resorts.”

“Last but not least,” he concludes, “as in all real estate, location is extremely important. And we are the closest, full-service resort to the Village of Placencia, so people can walk there, down the beach. The other resorts that are in our category of quality and service are outside of the Village and further up the road, so their guests have to get some kind of transport. But within our property, people can just walk or take a bicycle or even a kayak down along the shoreline and go have lunch or breakfast. So, they have the ability to utilize all of the culture, the gift shops, the night life, and the restaurants that are available in the Village.”

France says that Chabil Mar books its guests direct-

ly, as well as through agents and wholesalers. It also works with one of the OTAs (Online Travel Agencies), Booking.com. “When I first wanted to make people aware of who we were, we utilized people like Expedia, Orbitz, Travelocity, and Jetsetter,” he says. “But I always hoped, someday, that I wouldn’t have to use them, except in unique situations. And the reason for that is because of the volume of commission that they charge – they were charging 25 percent, while a wholesaler would charge 20 percent and an agent would charge 10 or 15 percent. But maybe three years ago, we finally got to the point where we were getting so many bookings through direct, and through agents and wholesalers, that I discontinued the contract with Expedia, Orbitz, and Travelocity, because we wanted to focus our attention and what monies we had available in our budget for marketing towards the agents and wholesalers who gave us great value. They understand



people have given us a five-star rating. So, I needed one or two OTAs that were synced with TripAdvisor and Booking.com is one of those.”

In another example of the type of personalized service offered at Chabil Mar, France relates that on its website, there is no immediate booking engine for guests to reserve villas, because the resort wants to talk with people, directly. “It just says, ‘Please send us your contact information through the website and we will contact you within 24 hours to discuss your objectives,’” he relates. “The other reason is that when people come to Belize, they want to do a lot of touring, so it gives us the ability to work with them on a personal level to find out what their wants, needs, and wishes are.”

France asserts that Chabil Mar is a property that has been designed and focused on everything that there is to celebrate about Belize. “Many new properties are very modern, not just in the interiors but on the exteriors, as well,” he says. “And so, what we are really very proud of is the architectural style of Chabil Mar; it’s lush with flowers and becomes intimate as a result. In the interiors are works by local artists and the furniture is made from Belizean wood. We have intentionally put plants on our property that come from all over the country and we actually brought soil from the western part of Belize where these plants grow to Chabil Mar, so when they were planted, they were planted in soil that would enhance their ability to grow. Chabil Mar is a statement and a celebration of all that is Belize.”

Which is why Chabil Mar’s motto is: “Beauty by Belize, Luxury by Design.”

## PREFERRED VENDOR

**Premium Wine and Spirits** - [www.facebook.com/premiumwinesandspirits](http://www.facebook.com/premiumwinesandspirits)

us; we like them, they like us; we treat them well and they treat us well.”

“And, of course, direct bookings are always great because of the margin of profitability involved in those types of bookings,” France adds. “So, I stopped using them, except for Bookings.com and Jetsetter. And the reason I kept them on was because they were willing to give us a commission contract for lower than 25 percent; and also, because they were linked with TripAdvisor. Being linked with TripAdvisor is extremely important because TripAdvisor has a lot of influence on buying decisions in the tourism industry. When I’m on the property and I ask our guests how they found out about us, pretty close to a hundred percent of them mention TripAdvisor in one way or another. We ask guests to write TripAdvisor reviews and we have a phenomenal TripAdvisor profile - 98 percent of the





## AT A GLANCE

**WHO:** The Placencia Hotel, Marina and Residences

**WHAT:** A complex of tourist hotels and amenities and residential homes

**WHERE:** Placencia, Belize

**WEBSITE:** [www.theplacencia.com](http://www.theplacencia.com)

she says. “They absolutely fell in love with the country and decided to start a small bed and breakfast. At that point, there were no paved roads, there was no electricity in the area, there was no water. So, a lot of infrastructure had to be done before anything could even start.”

Caruso did start his empire with an 18-room hotel, which opened in December 2003. “From there his vi-

# The Placencia Hotel, Residences, and Marina

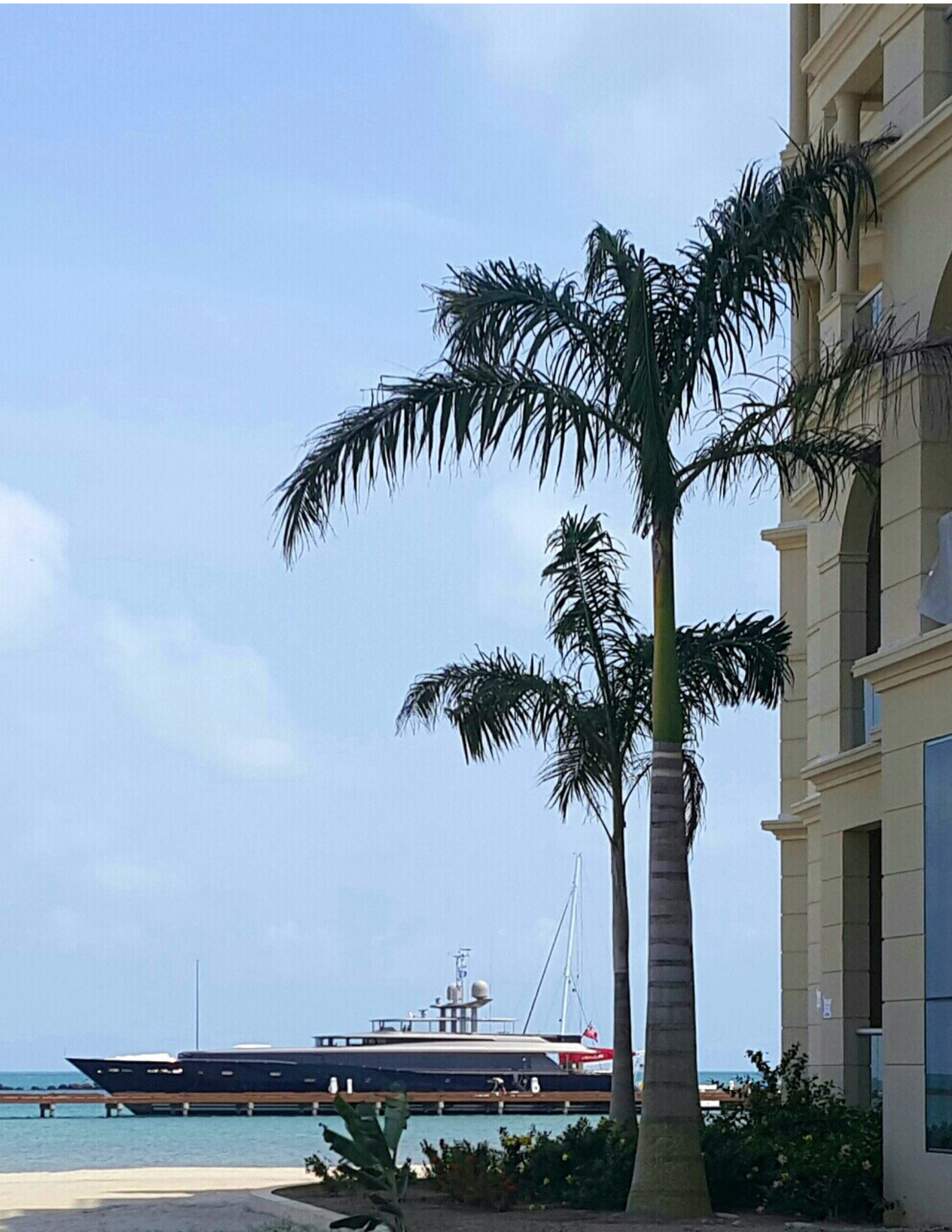
## *The beauty of Belize*

It’s unlikely that any other entity doing business in the Central American country of Belize has taken such advantage of the region’s natural beauty, nor offered such a compelling vision for its future development as The Placencia Hotel and Residences. Situated on the Placencia Peninsula, this 16-mile strip of tropical paradise, sandwiched between the Caribbean Sea and the Placencia Lagoon, boasts tall coconut palms, pristine

beaches, and now, one of the country’s most spectacular tourist and residential complexes.

Madeleine Lomont has been with the Placencia from the beginning and, today, she is the Executive Assistant to its owner and founder, Marco Caruso, as well as Head of Real Estate Sales. “I met Marco and his family when they first came here at the end of 2000,”





sion expanded into the current 90-room hotel,” Lomont continues. “Marco saw there was an opportunity for something even bigger. In 2004, there was a property available, which he saw would be a wonderful aspect to add to the hotel. At the end of the year, we started groundwork on what is now The Placencia Residences. It was an idea thought to be premature for its time, however having all that groundwork started allows us to be in a very unique position today, due to the amount of work accomplished when nobody was thinking in this direction. We now have fully-paved roads, our own water system in-house, and underground power as well. We have made many big jumps over the years.”

“We have 156 lots within The Placencia Residences and there are currently 50 homes constructed or in partial construction,” Lomont continues. “So we’re about a third of the way through with constructing homes within that part of the development. Some are

built over multiple lots, so there will be around 140 homes when we’re through. We have full-time owners, as well as owners using their homes for vacation, with the intention of moving down full-time upon retirement; others have their homes as an investment property. A lot of people who never expected to move here full-time have done so. Belize has become more and more attractive for full-time living.”

There are several reasons why that is so. Lomont stresses the country’s demographics (Belize has one of the lowest population densities on the planet with just over 330,000 people); its unspoiled, natural environment; and the fact that it is the only Central American country that is English-speaking and functions under British Common Law, having once been the colony of British Honduras. In addition to those appealing aspects are the country’s very friendly economic incentives. Belize has no property purchase restrictions

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for foreigners, and it offers a generous Retirement Incentives Program that allows Qualified Retirement Persons to move personal effects to the country free of all import duties and taxes.

Because of all those obvious advantages, Lomont says that the company is in full-growth mode. In addition to the initial phase of The Placencia Residences, she reports that a second phase of construction will fill another 49 lots. "In addition to The Residences, we have condominiums at Copal Beach Resort, condominiums at Marina Village, additional lots and condominiums at the Panther Golf Course, and town homes at the Placencia Residences Phase II. By the time we're done, we'll have about 2,500 residential components. We're building an international town."

While most guests and residents at The Placencia now come from the U.S. and Canada during the high sea-

son, because - according to Lomont - that's where the majority of flights come from, the company's vision is much broader and it wants to reach beyond its current market. But to truly become a year-round, international destination, there has to be a way to allow direct flights from Europe, South America, the Caribbean, and additional locations in North America, to access the area. So, the company is building its own, privately-financed, international airport, just minutes north of the resort. With its 9,200 ft. runway, it is sized to accommodate today's giant commercial jet liners, including 777s, 787s, 747s, and Airbus aircraft. And, in addition to boosting traffic to The Placencia and southern Belize, Lomont believes that it will help Belize's general economy because the country will be getting a second international airport through private investment. "It's something they very much like," she quips.

But The Placencia's growth isn't stopping there. "We

also have Copal Beach Resort, another resort we're completing," says Lomont. "And that will have about 263 rooms and a three and a half acre pool. We are building a state-of-the-art hospital located close to our airport and Panther Golf Club, a private, 18-hole,

Robert Trent Jones Signature Golf Course. Marina Village, which we're developing along the beach by the hotel, is a full commercial complex - a town center so to speak. There are a lot of different aspects that we're working on, the vision is pretty firm and the approvals



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have been given for what we are intending to do.” Of course, there is much in The Placencia domain that is already completed for the benefit of its guests and residents alike, including The Placencia Marina, which will offer up to 263 slips, including 25 for super yachts. “We have the only super-yacht marina in Belize where the big yachts can tie up alongside and have full use of the hotel and all its amenities,” says Lomont. “We also have the only casino in the region, which we opened up in May.” The exclusive VIP Casino boasts 150 slot machines, 7 game tables, a bar, and is serviced by The Placencia Hotels Capriccio Restaurant. Within the next two years, the Casino will be expanded to 200 slot machines, 30 game tables, a lounge, a nightclub, and a five-star restaurant.

The Placencia Hotel and Residences has progressed far from its original conception as a “small bed and breakfast,” and has become “a property that offers a bit more than the average resort would,” Lomont says in a most understated way. But however large and still-growing it may be, Lomont stresses that because its

founder, Marco Caruso, has continued to be a daily, on-site presence, and because the property has not changed hands since its inception, it’s still a “very personal, very private, and very cozy” place to live or visit – and certainly a very special place to experience the “Beauty of Belize.”

## PREFERRED VENDORS

**Belize Electricity Ltd.** - Belize Electricity Ltd. (BEL) is the primary distributor of electricity in Belize, Central America. The company serves a customer base of approximately 70,000. BEL’s national electricity grid connects all major municipalities (load centers), except for Caye Caulker, with approximately 1,850 miles of transmission and primary distribution lines. The grid is supplied by local Independent Power Producers utilizing hydroelectricity, biomass, petroleum, and solar energy sources. The Government of Belize (GOB) is the largest shareholder in BEL - [www.bel.com.bz](http://www.bel.com.bz)

**Premium Wine and Spirits** - [www.facebook.com/premiumwinesandspirits](http://www.facebook.com/premiumwinesandspirits)



# The Bonaire International Airport

*Full service and growing*

According to Michael Nicolaas, CEO of the Bonaire International Airport, aviation on the small Dutch island of the Netherlands Antilles got its start 80 years ago, with the initial landing of a KLM flight at Bonaire's first airport, a small airstrip situated at Tra'i Montaña near Subi Blanku. In 1943, at the insistence of the American army, which was transshipping its soldiers to the war front via Bonaire, construction began on a new airport, at a new location: the Flamingo Airport, near Kralendijk, which began service in 1945.

Over the years, Bonaire continued to serve as a major hub for KLM, connecting all its European flights going to South America. Also over the years, the facilities at the Flamingo Airport have had to be continually upgraded and expanded in order to meet the demands of increasing air traffic as well as the ever-larger aircraft

flying onto and off of the island. The original passenger terminal was replaced in 1976, and the runway was widened and lengthened a number of times. Today, it has a length of 2,880 meters – long enough to serve the large, modern jetliners that carry international passengers and cargo.

In 2008, the Airport began implementing its 15-year master plan, ushering in a new era of expansion and

growth. In Phase 1, completed in 2011, the runway was completely renovated. Nicolaas says that Phase 2a is finished, and Phase 2b is imminent. “We just completed construction of a new \$5 million, state-of-the-art, new Air Traffic Control Tower,” he reports. “And now we can proceed to construct a new apron that can accommodate five wide-body aircrafts like an Airbus 330, or a 747.” Phase 3, will be the construction of a new passenger terminal.

Nicolaas says that, today, the Airport is looking at “different initiatives,” that will help increase traffic – both passenger and cargo – while also providing more services for its customers. “We see a strong growth in corporate operations,” he explains. “And that’s one of

## AT A GLANCE

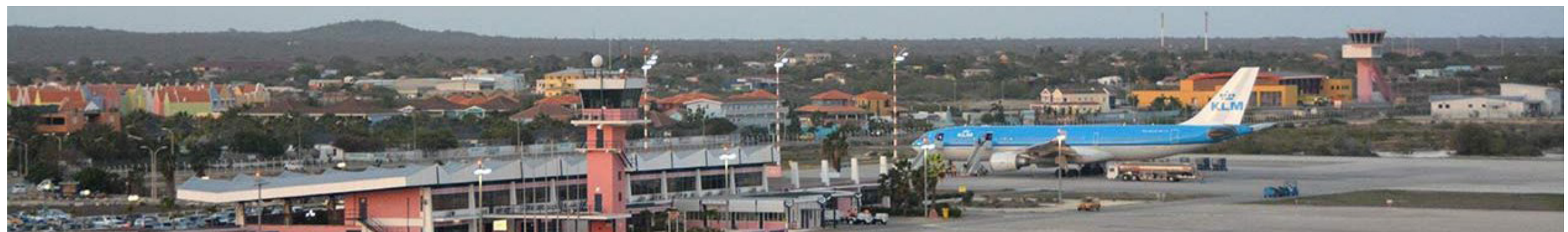
**WHO:** The Bonaire International Airport

**WHAT:** Serving the island of Bonaire

**WHERE:** Kralendijk, Bonaire, N.V.

**WEBSITE:** [www.bonaireinternationalairport.com](http://www.bonaireinternationalairport.com)

the reasons that, very soon, we will be issuing a Request for Proposal (RFP), for international Fixed Base Operators (FBOs), to come and provide their services





at a new facility that we hope to develop for corporate jets and other types of general aviation.” (FBOs provide services such as fueling, hangaring, tie-down and parking, aircraft rental, aircraft maintenance, flight instruction, etc.)

“We have also been upgrading a new fire station, and we’re looking into creating other sorts of development for the airport, like a maintenance, repair, and overhaul facility (MRO),” Nicolaas continues. “So, there are quite a few developments going on at this present time at the Airport to make sure that we are well-positioned to manage the growth that we expect both in passengers and cargo, but also in other types of activities, like the FBOs, corporate jets, and the MRO that will be coming to Bonaire in the coming years.”

While Nicolaas says that capital improvements that are considered necessary for airport safety - such as the new air traffic control tower and the new runway apron - are financed through grants from the Dutch Government, developments such as a new passenger terminal, or an FBO, will have to be partly financed by private investors. “We’re looking for public/private partnerships - PPPs,” Nicolaas says. “The Bonaire Air-

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DC-ANSP is an Air Navigation Service Provider (“DC-ANSP”) which is responsible for the Air Traffic Services within the Curaçao Flight Information Region including HATO and Flamingo International Airport.

### THESE SERVICES CONSIST OF:

- Air Traffic Control Services;
- Flight information and
- Alerting services.

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- The publication of a Dutch Caribbean Aeronautical Information Publication containing thorough details of regulations, procedures and other aeronautical information of Curaçao, Bonaire, St. Martin, Saba and St. Eustatius;
- The publication of information which alerts aircraft pilots of potential hazards along a flight route or at a location that could affect the safety of the flight for all the islands of the Dutch Caribbean.

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Throughout the years, DC-ANSP has not only maintained high quality of safety and efficiency, but has also continuously improved this along with service performance, human resources and organizational development with the ultimate aim to transform Air Traffic Management performance in the Curaçao airspace.





port has quite a bit of property that we can develop with different investors to make most of these projects economically viable.”

Aside from its capital projects, the Airport’s day-to-day operations are financed by the airlines that serve Bonaire and the passengers who travel on them. Among the international carriers are KLM, the oldest with six frequencies per week; TUI, flying out of Holland; Delta, out of Atlanta; and United out of Houston and Newark. Insel Air and Divi Divi Air both fly between Bonaire and Curacao, another island in the Netherlands Antilles chain. And Nicolaas reports that the International Air Transport Association (IATA) has recently approved a modest increase in airport fees for the next five years in order to help support those operations.

But he also maintains that in order not to put too much burden of the Airport’s costs on its customers, it needs to devise different ways to raise more non-aeronautical revenues. And some of his proposals are eye-opening. “We’re very focused on how we can further use the Airport properties to bring the community to the airport by creating other types of amenities that

are not only used by passengers, but also used by the public in general,” he says. “For example, we’re looking to construct a bowling alley at the airport. We have the space, so why don’t we bring some people to the airport to bowl? We’re looking for partners to do that.”

Nicolaas also suggests that the Airport could host a hotel and convention center as part of a greater airport city and that Bonaire is particularly well-positioned for this type of growth. “The opportunity that Bonaire Airport is offering is to be part of Holland, not just part of the region as a Caribbean airport,” he declares, “and because you’re part of Holland, you can easily do business with Europe. If you want to be part of any European type of exchange business, Bonaire is the place to be. Another thing is that Bonaire is in the unique situation of having a Class 1 runway, with the availability of space to develop. Also, we’re so suitably located from the U.S. – it’s only a two and a half hour flight from Atlanta, or four hours from Newark.”

Eighty years after the first flight touched down on this small, Dutch island in the southern Caribbean, Bonaire International Airport is poised for another period

of growth and development. And it is actively looking for like-minded partners who are as intrepid and confident as its original aviators and risk takers. “Most

times you look at an airport and say ‘Where do I fit?’ because most of the opportunities have been taken already,” Nicolaas states. “Bonaire is in a favorable

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position in that we are developing. And we are looking for people to develop with us and make this sustainable. We invite people to come and develop the airport with us in a smart way that becomes a win-win for all the stakeholders.”

## PREFERRED VENDORS

**DC-ANSP** - Dutch Caribbean Air Navigation Service Provider (DC-ANSP) is an Air Navigation Service Pro-

vider which is responsible for the Air Traffic Services within the Curaçao’s Flight Information Region. These services consist of: accompanying planes while airborne, airport assistance, providing flight information, and alerting services to mainly Curaçao and Bonaire. DC-ANSP was first founded as the Netherlands Antilles Air Traffic Control (NAATC) which was incorporated in Curaçao on February 9th, 2005, and became operational on April 1st 2006. DC-ANSP operates under the

rules set down by the Curaçao Civil Aviation Authority which are developed using International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) guidelines. As for the services rendered on Bonaire, it operates according to the BES-legislation. [www.dc-ansp.org](http://www.dc-ansp.org)

**Water- en Energiebedrijf Bonaire** - A state enterprise, Water and Energy Company Bonaire N.V. (WEB), founded in 1963, is owned by the Public Entity Bonaire. As

an “exclusive”, multi-utility company, WEB is responsible for an affordable, reliable, and sustainable supply of drinking water and electricity to approximately 8,900 households, companies, and organizations on Bonaire. - [www.webbonaire.com/en/](http://www.webbonaire.com/en/)

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## AT A GLANCE

**WHO:** Danosa Caribbean Inc.

**WHAT:** A manufacturer of rolled-roof membranes and roofing products

**WHERE:** San Juan, Puerto Rico

**WEBSITE:** [www.danosapr.com](http://www.danosapr.com)

ica, and the aforementioned synthetic rubbers, rolled roofing provides the water-tightness that every roof requires.

The company began its operations in 1978, as a subsidiary of Danosa Spain, which saw the island of Puerto Rico as the most logical place to expand its corporate reach into the western hemisphere. Up until that time, rolled roofing was strictly a European technology; today, it is an industry standard, everywhere. "Everybody that has a roof, whether it's a house, or an institutional building like a hospital or a school, or

# Danosa Caribbean Inc.

*For when the weather gets tough*

Having a roof over one's head is vital. The need for shelter is a definitive one, and a sturdy roof has always been the symbol of humanity's reliance on this essential element of survival. A strong roof provides safety from the elements – and if it does not, if it allows the rain to leak through, it is not doing the job it is meant to do, nor living up to the expectations of the human beings below it. Making sure that roofs do their job is the mission of Danosa Caribbean, Inc. of Puerto Rico.

Danosa is a world-class manufacturer of SBS (styrene-butadiene-styrene) and APP (atactic-polypropylene) roll waterproofing membranes. All of Danosa's products are manufactured in the company's 50,000 square foot facility in Bayamon, Puerto Rico, and then distributed to residential, institutional, and commercial buildings throughout the island and beyond. Made from various materials such as asphalt, bitumen, fiberglass, polyester, polyethylene, aluminum, ceramic, sil-





a manufacturing plant, is a potential customer for us,” says Waleska Rivera, who worked for Danosa for many years before acquiring the company in 1994, and becoming its President.

Today, Danosa Caribbean has the capacity to manufacture over 164 million square feet of roofing membranes per year – that’s 1,642,500 rolls. Although the company has only 50 employees who work at its plant, office, and three warehouses, Danosa represents more than 2,000 indirect employees within its network of suppliers and clients. More than 70 percent of its raw materials are purchased locally, and all of its distributors and installers are independent roofing contractors who install its products.

Rivera maintains that there are no other plants like hers in the Caribbean. “That being said,” she demurs, “we do compete with everyone else that manufactures

materials like ours, or similar to ours, that may come from Europe, or South America, or the United States.” Nonetheless, Danosa’s products represent more than 70 percent of the Puerto Rican market, largely because of the company’s commitment to quality, price, and maximizing client satisfaction. “We are a family-owned company but we work like a multi-national as far as productivity, efficiency, and service,” she says. “And if somebody needs service, it’s very easy to find us after being in the same place since 1978.”

In addition, Danosa continues to stay abreast of the industry’s technological advancements and, over the years, its products have evolved to meet the changing needs of the marketplace. “We have new products that have been developed in the last four or five years, such as self-adhesive products, products for underlayment, products for green roofs, and products with a finish that are Energy Star-rated, as well as, expanding our

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While Danosa does export its products to places such as Chile, the Dominican Republic, other Caribbean islands,

and even the United States, Rivera says that increasing its export market is on the top of her agenda over the coming years. “We want to be well-known, well-accepted, well-used, and well-recognized out of our geographic region; out of what we always call ‘the hun-



**Congratulations to  
Waleska Rivera and  
DANOSA CARIBBEAN**

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dred by thirty-five,' which is what the island measures in miles," she declares. "So, we're actively participating in different trade fairs and missions in different countries to increase our market reach abroad. We have an export team, dedicated to make it happen."

For more than 38 years, Danosa Caribbean has been delivering the highest-quality, pre-fabricated roofing solutions to architects, developers and builders, roofing contractors, and homeowners. And that's a good thing. Because, when the weather gets tough, it's important to know that the roof overhead is equally tough - so that it can do the job it was meant to do.

### **PREFERRED VENDORS**

**Karnak Corporation** - The Karnak Corporation manufactures a complete line of reflective coatings, cements, and sealants for roofing and waterproofing, and is the leading manufacturer of Energy Star labeled coatings. All of its products are rated for fire resistance and wind uplift by UL and FM, and are certified by UL to comply with ASTM (American Society for Testing and Materials) specifications. -[www.karnakcorp.com](http://www.karnakcorp.com)

**Fortiflex, Inc.** - [www.fortexfortiflex.com](http://www.fortexfortiflex.com)



## AT A GLANCE

**WHO:** Queen Elizabeth Hospital

**WHAT:** Barbados' primary, acute care medical facility

**WHERE:** Bridgetown, Barbados

**WEBSITE:** [www.qehconnect.com](http://www.qehconnect.com)

# Queen Elizabeth Hospital - Barbados

## *Getting better together*

The Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH) is Barbados' primary acute care medical facility, as well as an accredited teaching hospital affiliated with the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill campus. The institution was opened on November 14, 1964. "We celebrated 50 years in 2014," says hospital CEO, Dr. Dexter James. "We started with 464 beds and today we have 600 beds, providing a wide range of medical, diagnostic, and therapeutic services."

Regarding its surgical services, in addition to general surgery, James says that QEH also offers minimal invasive surgery, urology, ENT (ear, nose, and throat), gynecology, cardio-thoracic, orthopedic, dental, ophthalmology, and neurosurgery. "So there's quite a range of surgery that we currently provide that can meet the needs of the population," James says. "There are very few cases that we now refer overseas for care and these are mainly patients that require cardiology in-

terventions and a very, very few, if any, neurosurgical cases. We have two neurosurgeons, two cardiovascular surgeons, and seven or eight specialists in ophthalmology - apart from general adult ophthalmology, we have pediatric ophthalmology, ocular plastics, corneal, retinal, and neuro-ophthalmology. So there are a number of specialties for eyes. In the case of obstetrics and gynecology, we now have consultants in high risk pregnancies, and we have a consultant in gynecology who addresses all 'below-the-belt' cancers in women."

Queen Elizabeth Hospital has 2,100 employees. "It's the largest single employer of public officers in any one space," James states. "We are a stand-alone facility with a number of departments having outpatient

clinics within the hospital. So, surgery has its own outpatient clinics, as do pediatrics, obstetrics and gynecology, and, of course, internal medicine. So, when patients are seen and surgical interventions are done, and patients are discharged from the hospital, they are then seen in outpatient clinics within the hospital, and within the respective specialty where the procedure was done."

Because Barbados practices a socialized model of healthcare, akin to the same type of model found in the UK and Canada, any Barbadian national or permanent resident of the island can take advantage of any of QEH's services at no charge. "It is funded by taxation," James says. "Once you are a citizen or permanent resident, healthcare is free at the point of delivery - you don't pay anything at all for healthcare. We receive our allocation as approved by Parliament and funds are then dispersed to us from the Treasury via the Ministry of Finance. Those funds are allocated across the hospitals and health clinics in the country. The Queen Elizabeth Hospital has been set up as a statutory body, and therefore, we have a Board of Directors and an executive management team responsible for the operations and management of the hospital. So we can partially direct how our funds are utilized to improve the quality of services and where our priorities lie in



terms of management of patients.”

Dr. James believes that while the healthcare system in Barbados is capable of providing excellent services for its population, the taxation model may not, in the long-run, be the best way to keep up with increased healthcare costs and continuing changes in the healthcare landscape. “On the financing side, we are having a conversation about changing the model more along the line of social health insurance,” he says, “because the monies that are appropriated every year by Parliament to meet the recurrent expenditures of the hospital is inadequate for several reasons: you have changes in consumer taste and preference; you have changes in the demographics of patients – Barbadians are living longer, but, unfortunately, they are not living healthier; and there are changes in technology. So when you

look at all the drivers of healthcare costs, the taxation model cannot keep pace with the demands of the system. So, the government has to find a new model.”

“Under the taxation model, everybody pays taxes; it goes into a consolidated fund, and then the Ministry of Finance decides how those funds are to be allocated across the various government ministries,” James continues. “Under socialized insurance, every citizen will pay a certain amount of their salary, or it can be employer, or employer/employee funded; it goes into a fund and those funds are then used to meet the expenses of the healthcare providers. And that is the model that most countries that have tax-based models are moving toward - a model that is more along socialized insurance. And so we’ve had financing conferences over the last three years and I’m happy to

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achievement of hospital accreditation by an internationally recognized body will be one of the top items on QEH's agenda. "Hospital accreditation is perhaps one of the biggest transformational pieces that is going to happen to us in the next two to three years, where we can benchmark our services against a set of internationally accepted standards," he remarks. Aligned with that pursuit is the Hospital's development of what James calls "Centers of Excellence" in the areas of ophthalmology, cardiology, neurosurgery, oncology, and intensive care. "Such an award would position us as a true center of healthcare excellence where we can raise the bar in terms of quality and patient safety," he maintains.

"The other area that would be big for us, and has borne a lot of fruit, is the continued exploration and exploitation of information and communications tech-

say that the Ministry [of Health] has now adopted a position that a new financing model is inevitable if we are to sustain the package, here. I understand a paper is shortly going to be presented to the Cabinet for deliberations. I don't know which of the models the government will embrace, whether it will consider continuing with the taxation model or moving along with socialized health insurance. But the latter approach is what I am advocating."

While James hopes to see the day when a new financing model is incorporated to meet QEH's operating expenses, when it comes to capital improvements, yet another option is being explored. "In terms of capital improvements, we have embarked on philanthropy, where we are seeking to interest and invite persons with high net worth, or even the ordinary citizen, to make a contribution towards the re-capitalization of the Hospital," he says. "In that regard, we've launched an Equipment Prospectus, the last of which was in February of this year, and I'm happy to say, in three

years' time, we've raised in excess of \$10.2 million in hospital philanthropy. So, philanthropy is going to be big; we intend to set up an institutionalized desk of philanthropy that will properly service and manage many of these donors who may wish to make a contribution to the hospital."

Meanwhile, another way in which QEH raises additional revenue is via fees paid by private patients who may come to Barbados from the neighboring OECS (Organization of Eastern Caribbean States) countries, and elsewhere, for their healthcare needs. "Our doctors have private practice privileges," James says. "They can bring private patients into the hospital, operate on them, and charge them a fee. The patient also pays the hospital a fee in accordance with our fee schedule. So, it's one of the ways we raise a bit of revenue - by leveraging when these doctors bring these patients to the hospital."

Over the next several years, James says that the

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nology. Teleradiology is already well-developed at the Hospital – our lab is fully computerized; results are now available online in real time, remotely and electronically. And the Ministry has embarked on a national health management solution system which will now see the true computerization of the primary, secondary, and tertiary care facilities, where electronic medical recording will be the order of the day, allowing for the seamless movement of patients from the ‘point of connect’ to the hospital and across the continuum of care.”

As Queen Elizabeth Hospital embarks upon its second half century, Dr. James proudly asserts that the facility’s diversity of services is unrivaled by any public healthcare system. “Queen Elizabeth Hospital provides the widest range of public health services that you can find in any one setting,” he declares. “Persons can access care without having to worry about the costs. And the fees that we charge to non-nationals and those who come from overseas are exceedingly low, but the quality is exceedingly high. The breadth and depth of services that we offer is unsurpassed.”

Queen Elizabeth Hospital of Barbados – “Getting Better Together.”

## PREFERRED VENDORS

**A.A. Laquis Barbados Ltd.** – A.A. Laquis Barbados Ltd. is one of the largest indigenous distribution companies in the region with a diversified portfolio of Healthcare,

First Aid, and Consumer businesses. The company is committed to improving the longevity and quality of life for the Barbadian people through home health care, education on lifestyles that promote healthy living, and products that can equip consumers to achieve their health and wellness goals. Its Medical Division exists to provide life saving equipment and supplies to both government and private health care institutions, medical schools, and professionals across the Caribbean, and with over 15,000 skus, it is the largest supplier of these medical products across the Caribbean - from hospitals in Jamaica in the North, to Guyana in South America. - [www.aalaquis.com](http://www.aalaquis.com)

**Bryden Stokes Ltd.** – One of the largest distribution companies on Barbados, Bryden Stokes Ltd. (BSL) has three business divisions: Food & Consumer, Brewery, Wine, Spirits & Tobacco, and Health & Wellness. Its Health and Wellness division supplies pharmaceuti-

cals, medical and surgical equipment, and healthcare products from its portfolio of healthcare companies. - [www.brydenstokes.com](http://www.brydenstokes.com)

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‘Sparkle’ brand flavors include Lime, Banana, Cream Soda, Sorrel, and Cola Champagne. “And we have been increasing the number of flavors that we offer,” Phillip adds. “In October 2015, we launched four additional flavors: Sparkle Grape, Sparkle Orange, Sparkle Tropical Fizz, which is a lemon/lime-based drink, and our Sparkle Tropical Cola. And we do not produce just soft drinks. We also produce water, which is known as ‘Aqua Vita.’

In a competitive marketplace, Phillip believes that one of his company’s advantages lies in the fact that it is the only soft drink producer on the island. “However, because of the openness of our economy, there are other Caribbean producers that export to St. Kitts,” he says. In addition, Coca-Cola, with whom SKBC is no longer associated, still maintains a distribution presence in the southern Caribbean. “What differentiates us are two things,” Phillip maintains. “The quality of our product is well-known, having been in existence for 60-odd years; and there’s also the local component –

## AT A GLANCE

**WHO:** The St. Kitts Bottling Company Ltd.

**WHAT:** A manufacturer and wholesaler of bottled water and soft drinks

**WHERE:** Basseterre, St. Kitts & Nevis

**WEBSITE:** [www.stkittsbottlingcompany.com](http://www.stkittsbottlingcompany.com)

persons are more ‘touched’ because it’s a local company.”

While SKBC continues to preserve its share of the local market, it is also pursuing business outside of the country. “In terms of new markets, we are in serious discussion with a company out of St. Lucia,” says Phillip. “We will be bottling for them under a different label, and shipping to them under a co-pack arrangement.

## The St. Kitts Bottling Company Ltd.

### *Getting it right on soft drinks*

The St. Kitts Bottling Company (SKBC) was formed in 1954, when a group of local entrepreneurs purchased a small bottling operation in Basseterre. According to Keithley Phillip, SKBC’s current Director, before that time, the island was importing its soft drinks from Antigua. “The company started with 12 employees,” says Phillip. “We started with our first brand, a local, indigenous brand called ‘Sparkle.’ About two years later, we started our Coca-Cola franchise agreement.” The com-

pany continued to bottle and sell that world-famous soft drink for over 50 years, only ending the relationship in early 2015.

“We are manufacturers and wholesalers,” says Phillip. “We produce for the federation of St. Kitts and Nevis, and we also export to the United States, St. Croix and St. Thomas, the British Virgin Islands, Montserrat, Anguilla, Dominica, and St. Lucia.” The company’s





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Caribe Industrial Systems, Inc. (CISI) was founded in 1977 by Warren C. and Donna E. Gundry. The company is celebrating 40 Years of being in business early next year. CISI's mission is to provide its customers with unique cost saving ideas and solutions with its high-quality and innovative Packaging Materials and Equipment. For over 40 years, the company has served all major manufacturing sectors of Puerto Rico and the Caribbean Islands from the Bahamas to Barbados and all Islands in between.

The company's clients include over 250 companies in the Pharmaceutical, Medical Device, Food & Beverage and Electronics Industries, among others. Its products include: hot melt and liquid adhesives, packaging and industrial tapes, cushioning material, air bags, tier sheets, corner boards, slip sheets, coding products, thermal transfer ribbons, labels, plastic pallets and containers, tape and label dispensers, desiccants, printed stretch sleeves, reclosable polyethylene and medical/bio hazardous bags, security seals, a wide assortment of poly bags, tamper evident shrink bands and shrink sleeves, stretch films, shrink and bundling films, propane gas tank stretch sleeves and plastic plugs, and more.

On the equipment side, CISI offers adhesive application equipment, stretch wrapping equipment, shrink film sealers and tunnels, semi-automatic and automatic strapping systems, hand tools for manual strapping applications, carton/product coding equipment, case tapers and case erectors, bag sealers, cartoners, labeling equipment, and more. Caribe Industrial is an authorized distributor for industry leading companies such as the Nordson Corporation, Henkel Adhesives, Intertape Polymer Group, and Sigma Stretch Films, along with many others.

CISI maintains its inventory in a 21,000 square foot warehouse strategically located at Bayamon, Puerto Rico, with daily scheduled deliveries to each of the island's municipalities. The company's primary goal is to offer its clients the highest quality products available at competitive prices, to surpass their expectations with superior service, and to conduct its business with its clients and supplier partners in an honest and ethical manner.

CISI stands for Creative packaging solutions, Immediate response to its customers' needs, Service with a smile and Industry-leading suppliers. Its dedicated employees are committed to excellence in all aspects of their business. Customer service personnel handle all orders efficiently and expeditiously. Its warehouse personnel assure that all orders are dispatched correctly and on time. CISI has a factory-trained technician for technical assistance.

CISI's website address is [www.caribeindustrial.com](http://www.caribeindustrial.com). Its headquarters phone number is (787) 787-2474. Please email them for more information at [cisi@caribeindustrial.com](mailto:cisi@caribeindustrial.com). The Physical Address is: Road 2 Km. 15.2, Hato Tejas, Bayamon, PR 00961 The Postal Address is: PO Box 60980, Bayamon, PR 00960

We are also actively in discussions with a company out of Trinidad and one out of Jamaica, and, hopefully, by the end of this year, we will also be co-packing for those two companies."

Should all of those partnerships come to pass, Phillip says that SKBC will likely have to increase its production schedule, and move from one shift per day to two. It will also have to improve its production equipment. "Our equipment is about nine years old and with any aging equipment, there would be the problems of breakdowns, obsolescence, etc.," he explains. "And so, in order for us to achieve what our projected goal is in terms of production, we will have to acquire certain upgrades in our equipment."

Another company goal is to become fully ISO-compliant. "We are working towards November of this year as the time that we would be ISO-22000-compliant," Phillip says. (ISO 22000 allows a company to show their customers that they have a Food Safety Management

System in place.) "We already are up to speed and we are doing all the 'heads-up checks,' etc. Had we been ISO-certified before, we would have already signed off on some of the co-pack arrangements that we are pursuing," he adds, ruefully.

Nonetheless, Phillip is justifiably proud of the company's products and the care it takes in making sure that they are pure and safe for its customers to drink. "We have a full, working lab staffed by three persons," he says. "All the products that leave our plant can only do so after our Quality Supervisor has stamped it 'Good to Go.' If not, the product will remain in our plant. We also have a good traceability program in place. And if, by chance, we have a problem with any of our products in the market, we can trace that product to its origin – either the date it was produced so that we can take samples, or the supplier of the raw material, so that they, too, can trace it back to the batch item that they sent to us."

Phillip is also proud of the company's transparency. "Our plant is open for anyone who wishes to visit us and see our processes. So, we regularly will have persons visit us," he declares. "Yesterday, we had persons from one of the government departments who wanted to come by and see our production methods and what goes into the producing of our water. And so,





transparency, as it relates to the goods we produce, is very important to us.”

Today, the St. Kitts Bottling company is majority-owned by the TDC Group of Companies, one of the larger general merchandise companies on St. Kitts and Nevis, which acquired 51 percent of the company shares in 2012. But SKBC still maintains its small-business ethos. “We want people to remember us as always putting the customer first, so customer service is one of our high points. We may not have always gotten it right, but we make the effort, and so I think that we are very close to getting it right.”

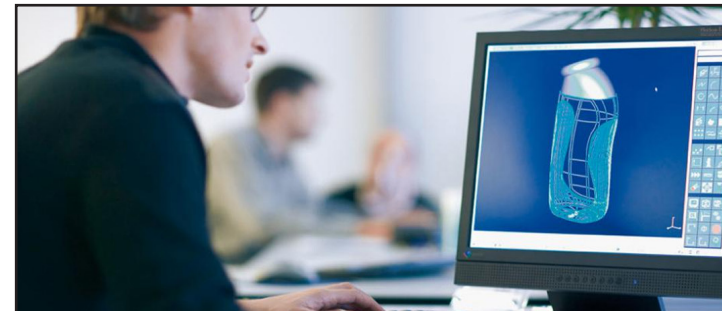
### PREFERRED VENDORS

**Caribe Industrial Systems Inc.** - Caribe Industrial Systems Inc. (CISI) was established in 1977 by Warren and Donna Gundry as a leader in the distribution

of Packaging Equipment and Materials in Puerto Rico and the Caribbean. Now, as a second generation company, CISI continues to satisfy the packaging needs of many of the world’s leading Food and Beverage, Pharmaceutical, and Industrial Manufacturing companies. Some of the products CISI provides include: tapes, stretch film, steel and plastic strapping, adhesives, plastic pallets, dispensers and sealers, poly shrink film, desiccants, labels and ribbons, and bags from world-renowned leaders in their respective industries. CISI also sells and services a broad line of packaging equipment for the consumable products it sells. - [www.caribeindustrial.com](http://www.caribeindustrial.com)

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# The Eastern Caribbean Securities Exchange

*Investing in the future*

The Eastern Caribbean Securities Exchange (ECSE) is a regional securities market established and licensed under uniform regional legislation governing securities market activities. It was designed to facilitate the buying and selling of financial products, including corporate stocks and bonds, and government securities, for the eight ECCB member states of the Organization of the Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) - Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat,

St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

According to Trevor Blake, ECSE's General Manager, the ECSE came into existence as a result of a diagnostic study made by the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank in the 1990s. "That diagnostic identified a number of gaps that existed in a fragmented financial system," he explains. "Amongst those was the need for other

forms of financing other than debt financing for companies in the productive sectors that drive the economy within the Eastern Caribbean. So, the Central Bank set about creating the securities market, developed the Exchange, the depository, the regulatory commission, and got the Securities Acts drafted for enactment by the member countries. And in 2001, the Exchange was launched."

A securities market is like any other market where buyers and sellers meet to exchange goods and services. The buyers (investors) are individuals and institutions who have money (capital) to invest. The sellers are corporations, governments, and other investors. "The Exchange provides a facility for people to buy and sell securities, financial assets, including equities, i.e. shares in companies, and debt securities, which are bonds issued either by member governments, or by corporations within the Eastern Caribbean Currency Union - the eight member states of the OECS that are members of the Central Bank and use a common currency - the Eastern Caribbean dollar," Blake explains. "We have a mix of institutional and retail investors. The retail investors mainly are in the equities side of the market; most of the institutional investors are active in the debt side of the market."

The ECSE provides both a primary and a secondary securities market. In the primary market, a public company or government (issuer) sells its securities for the first time to investors to raise capital to support its operations. The funds generated from this sale of securities go to the issuer. In the secondary market, investors buy and sell securities among themselves. The proceeds from this trading activity go to the investors, not back to the original issuer.

Currently, the ECSE has 13 companies listed - 12 domestic companies and one cross-listed company from Barbados. "Our Exchange is slightly different from

## AT A GLANCE

**WHO:** The Eastern Caribbean Securities Exchange

**WHAT:** A regional securities market for the member states of the OECS

**WHERE:** Headquarters in Basseterre, St. Kitts

**WEBSITE:** [www.ecseonline.com](http://www.ecseonline.com)

many other exchanges in the rest of the CARICOM (the organization of fifteen Caribbean nations and dependencies) in that our listings are predominantly debt securities," Blake says. "We have a very active government securities market and we have over 100 debt instruments listed - a mixture of government and corporate bonds; which is different from most exchanges that trade predominantly equities."

The ECSE is a fully electronic exchange, and according to Blake, it was the first regional one established in the Western Hemisphere. That means that all securities are traded in a "dematerialized" form - investors do not need to hold physical certificates to confirm proof of ownership as all shares are held in electronic form at the Eastern Caribbean Central Securities Registry Ltd. (ECCSR), a subsidiary of the ECSE. "And that lends itself easily to cross-border operations," Blake states. "Trading is done remotely by brokers on their various islands, logging onto our application. And all securities traded in our market are completely dematerialized - there are no physical securities; they're all held and traded fully electronically across boundaries."

Recently, Blake says that the ECSE has been working on restructuring some of its functions in order to provide better service for its clients. The consolidation of

Trevor E Blake, General Manager,  
Eastern Caribbean Securities  
Exchange.



its two subsidiaries, the ECCSR and the ECCS, into a new full service Central Security Depository (CSD) is one such initiative. “Previously, we had the ownership records and the accounts of investors who traded securities in our markets held in a separate registry, and we had a separate central securities depository that handled the post-trade operations and the market clearances and settlements after trading.”

The ECSE is also upgrading its technology. “We’re going to be going live with a new trading system within the next four or five months that will bring us right to the cutting edge of the modern functionalities that exist in terms of trading securities,” Blake reports. “We’ve been around for about 15 years with the same platform, so we are basically renovating the entire system and putting in new, modern, up-to-date trading and post-trading applications so that we can continue to grow our business and do so efficiently.”

Growing the ECSE’s business is on top of Blake’s agenda. “We are looking at making the ownership of shares and financial assets a lot more of an everyday thing within the Eastern Caribbean,” he says. “We want to extend the base of investors. Right now, we are pre-occupied with the technology issues, but once we’re over that, we are going to be focusing a lot on marketing and education – trying to sensitize the public within our member countries to the benefits of investing.” Blake also wants to expand the range of investors abroad, including those members of the Eastern Caribbean Diaspora, who are presently living in the United States and the United Kingdom.

But Blake also realizes that the ECSE needs to grow its trading volumes from the supply side, as well as from the demand side. “So, we are looking at expanding our range of products by attracting more foreign listings and by developing things like mutual funds, which,



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ECFH	HMB010716	DMG300634	AGG100721	VEN240717	GDB101015
FCI	HMB280916	LCG101124	AGG151228	VCN2417AA	GDB281115
GESL	HMB260317	LCG150729	AGG300740	VEG070316	KNG450457
GPCL	GES191217	FLN291115	FAG101015	VCG0316AA	FKG200432
RBGL	AGB060515	FLN010916	FAG070720	VCG0316AB	LCB180415
SKNB	AGB250515	FLN200717	FAG070121	VCG100816	LCB140515
SLES	AGB270615	FLG061215	FAG100923	VCG100917	LCB220515
SLH	AGB091015	FLG060216	FAG150626	VCG070821	LCB280615
TCL	AGB260216	FLG101017	DMB260615	VCG100422	LCB190715
TDC	AGN280716	FLG061119	DMG051117	VCG100323	LCN291115

Investing  
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right now, are not part of the range of products that we provide," he says. "We want to encourage the development of mutual funds within the region so that smaller investors can get involved with investing through a managed investor program."

Blake believes that with these initiatives in place, the ECSE can continue to grow and prosper. "We are a growing exchange; our listings are growing," he declares. "While we predominantly have debt securities listed, we are capable of doing the full range of securities and equities. We have general trading companies, we have utilities, we have financial services, we have government bonds. We have securities that are listed from six member countries that give a degree of diversification that you couldn't have in any other market in the region."

As the ECSE continues to mature, it will likewise continue to provide an ongoing and powerful vehicle for raising the capital necessary for the modernization and expansion of its member countries. And because its investors will be supporting new employment and business opportunities throughout the region, the Eastern Caribbean Securities Exchange will be playing its part - investing in the future.

### PREFERRED VENDOR

**Mac Pennies Computers** - First incorporated in St. Kitts & Nevis in 1969, today Mac Pennies is a family-owned company that offers services such as: printing and bindery; computer sales and repair; photography; network design, installation, and management; and IT support, to local and regional businesses. - [www.macpennies.com](http://www.macpennies.com)



## Grupo Bocel

*Pasta and more*

Grupo Bocel consists of two large companies: Industrial Dominicana, a manufacturer of pasta products, and Cibao Valley Mills, a maker of flour for the baking of cookies and biscuits. Industrial Dominicana was founded in the early 1960s by Bolivar Reynoso Dajer and Doña Celeste Fernandez de Reynoso, who noticed a shortage of pasta products in the country and wanted to provide low-cost alternatives to the customers who visited their store.

In 1962, Don Bolivar went to Italy to acquire pasta making machinery from the Braibanti firm for the production of long noodle pasta and other short pastas, such as macaroni and mostacholis. The machinery arrived in 1963, and two years later operations began. Since then, the company has been producing quality pasta products, under the Pasta Princess brand, reaching every corner of the country. Products include: spaghetti, noodles, mostacholis, penne, small and large

coditos, rigatoni, ravioli, gnocchi, natural and tricolor spirals, lasagna, and cannelloni.

In 1994, Don Bolivar founded Cibao Valley Mills, a wheat mill capable of processing 300 tons of flour per day. In 2009, the plant began making cookies, cakes, and crackers. Recently, the Bocel Group expanded the range of its Aviva brand crackers with the launch of Aviva Fine Herbs, a product that offers consumers the



## AT A GLANCE

**WHO:** Grupo Bocel

**WHAT:** A manufacturer and distributor of pasta products, cookies, cakes, and crackers

**WHERE:** Santiago and Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic

**WEBSITE:** [www.grupobocel.com](http://www.grupobocel.com)

tastes of parsley, oregano, and basil. These new flavors were aimed at an adult audience looking to enjoy new, healthful, wheat-based products.

Grupo Bocel's current general manager is Ruben



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Reynoso Fernández, the son of the company's founders. In 2015, Grupo Bocol celebrated its 50th anniversary as a family-owned, Dominican company that satisfies domestic palates while simultaneously exporting its products to 16 countries. The company is ISO 9001- and 14001-certified and holds several international awards, including the New Millennium Award granted in Paris, France, in 2004, and the Quality Summit Award in New York, in 2005.

### PREFERRED VENDORS

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## AT A GLANCE

**WHO:** Island Site Development

**WHAT:** A civil engineering and infrastructure development company

**WHERE:** Nassau, Bahamas

**Email:** [www.isdbahamas.com](http://www.isdbahamas.com)

to Island Site Development. More projects followed including: underground infrastructure at Baker's Bay Golf and Ocean Club in the Abacos; the new National Stadium and Sports Complex in Nassau; the new 56.6 acre Port Facility on Arawak Cay; the Lynden Pindling International Airport; the Comfort Suites Resort on Paradise Island; and a new Maritime Institute on Crystal Cay, among others.

A few years ago, ISD added an electrical component to its portfolio of civil infrastructure and water and sewer services, noting a lack of larger professional electrical contractors in the Bahamas. Chris Wilson, ISD's Senior Project Manager explains: "There were a lot of smaller contractors," he says. "So whenever a bigger job came up, a contractor from the States or Canada or somewhere else was brought in to do the work. We saw that there was a need to fill the gap." "So we started an electrical division," Gupta says. "Currently, about 40 percent of ISD's business is electrical work."

Now in its seventh year of operation, Gupta reports that ISD's clientele is currently split evenly between government entity work and private development - and all of it close to home. Because while ISD is always on the lookout for potential overseas projects, it has to be prudent about whom it works for - especially since

# Island Site Development

## A young firm makes its mark

Island Site Development (ISD) is a wholly Bahamian-owned civil engineering and infrastructure development company dedicated to civil works and community development. According to company COO, Naveen Gupta, the original name of ISD was BMC Underground Services, formed in 2009 to do all of the infrastructure

work on the Albany Project on New Providence Island. Albany is a 600-acre luxury resort community jointly owned by the Tavistock Group and golfers Tiger Woods and Ernie Els, featuring upscale amenities including a mega-yacht marina, a championship golf course, restaurants, private residences, and resort villas.

"We completed that project at the end of 2010," Gupta says. Next, the company won a contract for the Baha Mar project, the West Bay Street Realignment. The scope of work included the complete re-routing of a major thoroughfare with the installation of miles of new water main, sewer force main, gravity sewer, storm drainage, and telecom and electrical conduits.

It was at this point that Gupta says the company needed a new structure and identity, so it brought together some partners in the form of a couple of local, family-owned construction firms and changed its name



ALBANY MARINA

12.3

moving an enormous amount of machinery and material across the water is a costly endeavor. “We don’t want to bid private projects unless we know the client’s financial position is good and that he will make payment at the end of the day,” he says. “In the meantime, we are mostly bidding Inter-American and Caribbean Development Bank funded projects.”

Another new service being offered by ISD is Design-Build. Design-Build is a relatively new method of project delivery to the Bahamas in which one entity – the Design-Build team – works under a single contract with the project owner to provide design and construction services. In traditional project delivery, an owner must manage two separate contracts and can sometimes get caught between the designer and the contractor,

as well as between their separate sub-consultants and sub-contractors. “It’s still a fairly new concept in the Bahamas,” admits Wilson, “and I think a lot of clients are a little bit wary having the contractor and the designer on the same side. And there aren’t too many companies that will undertake Design-Build here because they don’t like to take the additional risk. We’ll actually take the risk; we’ll bring on the designer and we’ll work with them to make sure that we stick within their budget.”

Gupta agrees that being willing to take risks is part of the company’s ethos. “We’re always looking for upgrades and trying to make ourselves better,” he states. “If we can see an opportunity, we will invest towards that opportunity.” Some of ISD’s other investments



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have been in other companies. It has a 50 percent share of a steel fabrication company, and wholly-owns two equipment sales, rental, and repair firms, and an asphalt recycling and patching concern.

Looking ahead, Gupta says that ISD has three objectives: the first is to overcome the cultural obstacles to Design-Build and bolster its portfolio of Design-Build projects; the second is to develop a public/private partnership for the construction, operation, and maintenance of desalination and waste water treatment plants; and the third is to further develop the electrical side of the business by exploring possible opportunities with the new Bahama Power and Light company, recently formed when the government of the Bahamas signed a Management Services Agreement with PowerSecure International, a leading provider of utility and energy technologies to electric utilities, and their industrial, institutional, and commercial customers.

Meanwhile, Gupta believes that ISD's present success comes from its high level of quality production and the fact that it works closely with its clients to earn their repeat business. "A lot of our clients don't know the technical aspects of the work, so we help them make the right decisions," he says. Wilson adds that it's also because the company delivers on its commitments. "Pretty much everything that we've done to date was finished on time and on budget," he declares. Being the new kid on the block has helped, as well. "Because we're quite a young company, we're quite flexible and we can move into areas where older companies that are more rigid and stuck in their ways, don't want to explore," says Wilson. "We're the opposite; we've been successful because we've been flexible."

"And we ask our employees how we can improve and get our business," Gupta adds emphatically. "Everybody has a wallet in this company."



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