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UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS

For more information contact
bha@bahamashotels.org or 242-322-8381

Board of Directors and Membership Meeting

British Colonial Hilton,
9:30 a.m.
June 13, 2013

**Special Guests: Hon. Leslie Miller, MP
Travis Robinson,
Jr. Minister of Tourism**



National Culinary Team

Taste of Caribbean Demonstration Dinner
One & Only Ocean Club
June 18, 2013

Board of Directors and Membership Meeting

Wyndham Nassau Beach
August 1, 2013

Board of Directors and Membership Meeting

Sandals Royal Bahamian
October 3, 2013

15th Annual Golf Tournament

Ocean Club Golf Course
October 6, 2013
12:30pm Tee Off

Annual General Meeting

Atlantis Paradise Island
December 6, 2013

Annual Online Holiday Auction

December 5-19, 2013

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

New Strategic Plan Drives BHTA Agenda:

Seven primary goals and forty-one strategies will guide the work of your association over the next five years. Each is tied to our mission: *'...to facilitate the profitability, quality, and sustainability of tourism for The Bahamas'*.

These are challenging times for our industry. Fierce competition, the high cost of doing business, an ongoing need for affordable airlift, developing our human resources, an impending major overhaul of our taxation system, marketing our diverse industry...all require the attention of public and private sector stakeholders. Collaboration has never been more important.

BHTA's new strategic plan underscores collaboration and maps out your organization's role to address many of these challenges. It reflects member input received from surveys we conducted earlier this year asking members to grade our performance and also to provide us with an indication of the goals and priorities we should be undertaking now and into the future. Your feedback helped the Executive Committee to shape the organization's five-year strategic plan.

Advocacy continues to be a top priority for the organization. We are actively working on several important matters which are outlined in the BHTA Quarterly Report.

Going forward, we will place added emphasis on offering members business operational training support and developing a member-to-member discount program. Over thirty detailed energy audits will assist those members and others in reducing their energy costs. Our work on education and training will continue to take prominence, with added urgency as the Baha Mar development moves closer to mass hiring.

We will continue to develop a more efficient organization fiscally and operationally while we also continue to grow. Your financial and volunteer support is appreciated and essential to our ongoing success and commitment to uphold BHTA's rich tradition of service to our industry and nation.



**Stuart Bowe, President
Bahamas Hotel & Tourism Association**

INDUSTRY'S FIRST QUARTER PERFORMANCE AND LOOKING AHEAD.....

While we are still awaiting the full results of our first quarter's performance, all indications point to varying results. Occupancies lagged behind forecasts early in the year but appear to have rebounded in March. Room rates have improved but are still below pre-recession levels. This confirms reports we received from hotels in Nassau-Paradise Island, the Family Islands and Grand Bahama.

With a shortened booking window, long-term projections are difficult, however, forecasts for the next several months show little year-on-year movement on occupancy with a small increase in room rates.

Members continue to report concerns about high

operating costs. While the 2012 profitability picture improved some, there continues to be vulnerability with 33% of members responding to our annual survey reporting a net loss, down from 41% in 2011.

The 2013 forecasted numbers suggest that we continue to push aggressive marketing initiatives by the public and private sectors, increase airlift and make it more affordable to travel to our destination, while steadily working to improve the business environment and quality of our product offerings.

The Bahamas National Culinary Team Demonstration Dinner

Tuesday, June 18, 2013

7:00pm Cocktails 8:00pm Dinner

At The Beautiful One & Only Ocean Club



BHA 2013 Executive Committee

Stuart Bowe
President
(Atlantis Paradise Island)

Robert 'Sandy' Sands
Immediate Past President
(BahaMar Limited)

Glenn Sampert
Senior Vice President
(Sheraton Nassau Beach)

Magnus Alnebeck
Vice President, Grand Bahama
(Pelican Bay Resort @ Lucaya)

Shavonne Darville
Vice President, Out Islands
(Gems at Paradise)

Patrick Drake
Vice President, Nassau-Paradise Island
(Sandals Royal Bahamian)

Vernice Walkine
Vice President Allied Members
(Nassau Airport Development Company)

Vaughn Roberts
Treasurer
(BahaMar Limited)

Nina Maynard
Small Hotels Representative
(The Corner Hotel)

Beverly Saunders
Workforce Development Chairperson
(Atlantis Paradise Island)

Frank Comito
Executive Vice President and
Corporate Secretary

BHA STAFF:

Frank Comito,
Executive Vice President

Charlotte Knowles-Thompson,
Executive Administrator

Dominique Duncanson,
Executive Assistant

Shamine Johnson, Manager
BHTA Grand Bahama and
Marina Operators of The Bahamas

Bridget Murray,
Workforce Development Manager

Latasha Allen,
Workforce Development. Administrative Assistant

New Address:
Serenity House, East Bay Street
(242) 322-8381
www.bhahotels.com

ADVOCACY AND GOVERNMENT RELATIONS**BHTA Prepares for Value Added Tax:**

- *Initial Recommendations and Questions Presented to Government and IMF*
- *Task Force Begins Impact Analysis*

A major overhaul of the nation's taxation system, moving from a dominant customs-duty based tax to a Value Added Tax, is planned for implementation by July, 2014. The Honourable Michael Halkitis, Minister of State for the Ministry of Finance, engaged members in a discussion on the proposed Value Added Taxation scheme at BHTA's April 4th membership meeting. Members raised a number of questions and concerns, many which are being considered by BHTA's recently formed Tourism Tax Reform Task Force. The task force presented its initial questions and concerns to the Ministry at a joint meeting last month with the Financial Secretary and members of the Government's VAT consultation group.



The new taxation scheme is intended to broaden the Government's revenue base by taxing service businesses, while reducing customs duties and excise taxes. The Bahamas needs to reduce its duty-excise tax rates in order to comply with World Trade Organization requirements and broaden its tax base as advised by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The BHTA President and Executive Vice President met with IMF officials recently to discuss VAT and other matters related to the tourism industry. The initial questions and recommendations which BHTA has raised with the Government were also discussed with the IMF team.

The Government is proposing several adjustments to the proposed 15% VAT, recognizing the competitive and cost issues the tourism sector experiences. A 10% VAT would replace the room tax while food and beverage in hotels would also be assessed at 10%. This practice has been put in place in several other tourism-dominant economies. The Minister advised that VAT can free up working capital, with the tax being paid at the point of a transaction and not before the transaction as occurs with duties/excise taxes.

BHTA has stressed the need to ensure that any new taxation scheme does not increase the already high cost of doing business for hotels and tourism-related businesses and should in fact be cost neutral. The Government's proposed July 1, 2014 implementation date, presents some initial concerns to BHTA.

Key points of discussion raised thus far by BHTA with Government are:

Duty Rates and Phase-Down Schedule – Need to know proposed new rates, phase-down schedule, and items eligible for credits for the private sector to have sufficient time to analyse the impact and offer recommendations if necessary. The Minister indicated we should have this information by June.

VAT 10% on Food and Beverages – BHTA questioned whether it is applicable to all restaurants or just those in hotels. BHTA also raised concerns about the perception raised by having a 10% VAT plus a mandatory 15% gratuity on a customer's bill. The idea of being allowed to incorporate the VAT on F&B into the menu prices posted to avoid that perception was advanced with some initial receptivity by the Government representatives.

10% on Hotel Room Charge - Industry indicated there needs resolution as to whether this applies to room charge only or also would be applied to energy surcharge, gratuities, and room levy, which industry felt would not be appropriate.

Contracted Groups Prior to Implementation – Hotels, tour operators and DMCs are confirming groups beyond the proposed July, 2014 implementation date with contracted room, F&B and other rates inclusive of taxes based upon the current scheme. This applies to hotels as well as tour operators and would need to be considered.

Special Circumstances for Small Hotels and Businesses, Particularly in Family Islands - BHTA pointed to the challenges which will be encountered by small hotels and businesses, particularly in the Family Islands where it is expected there will be added purchase costs, typically with a layer of wholesaler costs; shipping to islands, and increased bookkeeping and accounting costs, where availability of such services are limited on most Family Islands. Adjustments to the \$50,000 threshold exemption level or a delay in implementation for small businesses may be options to consider.

Impact on Investment Incentive Policies - Clarity would be needed on the impact of VAT on the Hotels Encouragement Act, Family Islands Development Act, Downtown Nassau Revitalization Act and what investment incentive scheme might take the place of the present duty-exemption incentives.

Implementation and Administration - Questions have been raised about the readiness of the Government in such a short timeframe to administer and enforce the new regime and also adequately prepare the private sector.

Private Sector Training and Awareness - VAT will require attention by the private sector to training, installation of new software and point of sale systems, bookkeeping, accounting and auditing practices, etc.

Other Areas Needing Consideration - Rate applicability for complimentary rooms for charities, FAM and press trips; ground transportation operator concerns; VAT applicability to casino winnings, long-term marina slip rentals; all-inclusive hotels, and clarity on what services would be subject to VAT.

As part of its review process, BHTA's Tourism Tax Reform Task Force will undertake to conduct a detailed analysis of the cost implications for the industry, developing models for a large resort, small hotel, restaurant, attraction, wholesaler and ground tour operator. These models will show the current level of taxation and cost impact for various line items and input areas and then layer that into a scenario with the proposed VAT rates, against a new duty schedule, then factor in credits to determine the true cost impact. The task force is beginning to build the models, but cannot complete them until there is a clear understanding of what the Government is proposing in detail regarding VAT, duty reductions, and allowable credits.

BHTA members are urged to review the Government's White Paper at:

<http://bhahotels.com/images/docs/govt-white-paper-tax-reform.pdf>. Both the Minister and BHTA President Stuart Bowe have pledged to work together to conduct the necessary industry-related analysis, consider impact and recommendations, and support awareness and training within the sector.

Government Considering Recommended Investment Upgrade Incentives for Small Hotels

The Government is reviewing industry data in support of providing duty exemptions through the Hotels Encouragement Act to stimulate upgrades in hotel properties. In follow-up discussions this month with several Government Ministers there was conceptual support for our recommendations. We are hoping to see positive action on this within the Government budget review process this June.

SME Act Aims to Consolidate Business Support Services, Calls for Private Sector-Led Entity

Recommendations have been submitted to the Government following a review of the proposed Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SME) Development Act which would establish the Small and Medium Sized Enterprises Development Agency (SMEDA).

The Act incorporates recommendations made by the Chamber of Commerce, BHTA and others over the past several years, whereby a quasi-Government entity would become the primary SME development vehicle and be managed and directed by a private sector Board of Directors. It brings many aspects of SME development under one public umbrella, intended to enhance the ability of The Bahamas Development Bank, BAIC, the Venture Capital Fund and all other public sector SME support programs to offer more relevant support to SME's.

Public support for SME development in the past has been focused primarily on loan funding through the Bahamas Development Bank (BDB). The technical, operational and marketing capabilities of SME's are as important to business success, if not moreso, than their capitalization needs. BHTA's review of SME needs through its IDB Supported Sustainable Tourism (STEMM) project several years ago analyzed the challenges facing SMEs and identified key areas where non-financial support is important to their viability.

SME Act Aims to Consolidate Business Support Services, Calls for Private Sector-Led Entity *cont'd*

BHTA's recommendations regarding the Bill focused on giving SMEDA a strong training and technical assistance support mandate, strengthening the Board with at least two tourism-related members and one finance expert, and creating sector-specific (clusters) advisory groups within the SMEDA organizational framework. The clusters would allow for sub-sector input and engagement at a working level, advising on training, advocacy, business development and marketing support.

Partners Work Together to Resolve Long Airport Arrival and Departure Wait Times

The BHTA in February received complaints from travellers concerning wait times at LPIA in excess of ninety minutes to clear Bahamas Immigration and additional extended waits through Customs. In an effort to address these complaints, BHTA collaborated with the Nassau Airport Development Company and the Ministry of Tourism to engage the Department of Immigration and Customs Department to seek a resolution.



A series of recommended steps were agreed upon to resolve the problem. Minister of Foreign Affairs and Immigration Fred Mitchell and Minister of Tourism Obie Wilchcombe were also engaged in the matter and assisted with a resolution.

Prior to Easter a number of measures were put in place including queue management, improved scheduling of officers, and additional officers to improve the process. The situation improved while work has also continued on the upgrading of technology and adding signage. Minister Mitchell is planning on increasing the number of officers and the department is recruiting and training them now.

The outbound flow to the United States thru US Preclearance improved considerably over the problems encountered last year. US Customs and Border Protection added to their LPIA officer complement late last year at the request of industry and the Government. That, along with improved scheduling, aided considerably in avoiding the problems encountered last year.

Industry Partners Work with Minister of Foreign Affairs and Immigration on Work Permit Matters

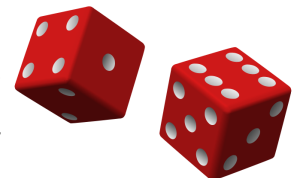


The Honourable Fred Mitchell, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Immigration and representatives for the nation's major private sector organizations met recently to agree to establish an ongoing public-private sector effort to undertake positive and constructive activities to address both the Government's and the private sector's needs related to work permits. Joining the Minister was Minister Ryan Pinder, Minister of Financial Services; Minister Khaalis Rolle, Minister of State for Investments; Immigration Director William Pratt; Chester Cooper and Edison Sumner from the Bahamas Chamber of Commerce and Employers Confederation; Stuart Bowe and Frank Comito with the Bahamas Hotel and Tourism Association; Robert Sands representing the Bahamas Hotel Employers Association; and Aliya Allen with the Bahamas Financial Services Board.

The parties agreed to work together to: undertake a skills needs assessment to help guide training; improve the current work permit review and approval process; strengthen communication between the Department and companies; and improve company awareness regarding procedures required to apply for short-term or long-term work permits, an appeals process, resources for training and sourcing potential Bahamian applicants.

Government and Casinos Committee Hammer Out Gaming Reform Details

The Casinos Committee's 18 recommendation areas for modernizing gaming laws and regulations are under review by the Government. While there appears agreement on most of the recommendations, it is hoped that resolution can be reached soon on several key areas. Among the recommendations are: providing greater flexibility in the types of games offered; allowing for segmented VIP gaming suites; providing for interactive gaming, on-property mobile gaming, and in play sports betting; and streamlining various approval processes with Government. Implementation of the Committee's recommendations could generate between \$17.25 million and \$30 million in incremental gaming tax revenue to the Government and make The Bahamas one of the world's most desired destinations for gaming. Discussions between the Committee and Government representatives progressed this to the point where government was preparing to introduce legislation. Minister Wilchcombe and the Gaming Board have been actively engaged in the review process.



Business and Product Development

BHTA Helps to Resolve Major Withholding Requirement for Most American Express Merchant Account Holders



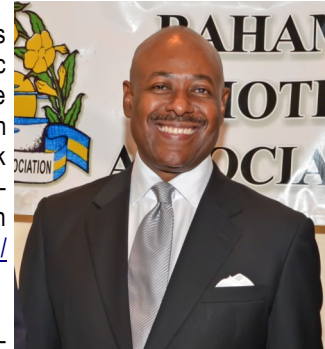
Working with American Express, the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association and the Nassau Paradise Island Promotion Board, BHTA assisted members with meeting filing requirements and securing reimbursement on funds withheld as a result of a new reporting requirement by the US Internal Revenue Service which became effective January 1, 2013. Many businesses were caught off-guard, not being aware of the filing requirement or having filed but not being notified of a discrepancy in the submission. This resulted in there being an automatic 28% withholding on reimbursement for transactions processed thru American Express.

The requirement did not affect merchants with accounts with other credit cards nor those who held an American Express merchant account thru the Bank of The Bahamas. In some cases, merchants reported being withheld substantial five and six figure amounts.

BHTA partnered with CHTA and NPIP and approached American Express for clarification on the problem and a resolution. American Express quickly put in place corrective plans, working closely with the US IRS, our organizations and members. By the end of January, American Express put in place a number of measures to support merchant filing, placed a hold on the 28 percent withholding if a waiver request form had been filed, and expedited reimbursements to merchants who had already been withheld the 28 percent. By early February the matter was resolved.

Ministry of Tourism Launches Online booking engine - Bahamas.com

Minister Obediah Wilchcombe and Director General David Johnson, joined by the Ministry's support team, unveiled the destination's 2013 promotion campaign, its corresponding public relations and digital marketing strategy and the new consumer booking engine which went live on Bahamas.com in March at the BHTA February membership meeting at the BC Hilton. With over 140 members and MOT managers in attendance for the two hour presentation, feedback was very positive and commitments were made to coordinate public and private sector strategies to maximize the benefits of the new initiatives. To view and download the full presentation given at the meeting, go to: <https://slingshot-us.mytbwa.com/a59e3de9d8bffa31db9225dbd0c25a2f>



The Ministry's 60 second "Behold" television commercial, which aired initially on a South Florida Superbowl feed, can be view by going to: <http://www.bahamas.com/bahamas/behold-islands-bahamas>. Hotel members who have not yet completed the necessary steps to be part of the new Bahamas.com booking engine should contact their Promotion Board. The Bahamas Out Islands Promotion Board has been actively working with members and the Ministry on training and troubleshooting to prepare members to take advantage of the new booking service.

CaribbeanTravel.com Goes Live



BHTA Hotel members have added CaribbeanTravel.com as a new avenue for exposure and business generation. The site went live last month and allows consumers to discover the Bahamas and the Caribbean with enhanced design and search capabilities as well as through desktops, tablets and mobile devices. The website was created by the Caribbean Tourism Development Company (CTDC), jointly owned by the official organizations of the region; the Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO) representing the governments and the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA). A property must be a member of BHTA and CHTA in order to participate in this member benefit.

BHTA attraction, tour operator and restaurant members can also participate if they are also a member of CHTA. Hotel members have been prompted to register for the site over the past six months yet a number have still not done so. You can view the site and check on your listing by going to www.CaribbeanTravel.com

Industry and Ministry Host Second Consecutive Successful Caribbean Marketplace



Members who participated in Caribbean Travel Marketplace 2013, held at Atlantis, saw an increase in pre-scheduled business meetings, up 226 from the 12,476 held the previous year. There was an increase in international buyer interest with 22 countries represented. Attendees gave the conference high marks for its organization and business value. Staged by the CHTA in conjunction with the Bahamas Ministry of Tourism, the Bahamas Hotel and Tourism Association, Atlantis and the Promotion Boards, from Jan. 20-22, the event afforded hotels and destinations of all sizes the opportunity to meet face-to-face with wholesalers selling Caribbean vacation travel over the course of two days of business meetings.

Highlighting the two-day event were festivities surrounding the retirement of Alec Sanguinetti, CHTA's director general and CEO, who had served for 19 years in executive positions with the association and 52 years as one of the tourism industry's top airline and hotel executives. Sanguinetti received fitting tributes from the Bahamas and CHTA. Business meetings just prior to Caribbean Travel Marketplace resulted in the CHTA Board of Directors calling for the Heads of Government to hold a summit on tourism within the next six months.

Special Committee to Plan New Member-to-Member Discount Program

While several members do offer fellow members courtesy discounts, the Executive Committee has agreed to formalization of a member to member discount program. This was agreed to based upon feedback received to support the development of the organization's new five year strategic plan. A small committee will be convened shortly to work on details. Stay tuned.

Business Operations Support Training Planned

Some members have recommended that BHTA put in place several initiatives to support the training and development of budding tourism-related businesses. To better determine the areas of focus – technical, operational, marketing, etc – BHTA will be convening an advisory group. If interested in helping to develop this area of support, please contact BHTA.

Workforce Development: Investing in Our People

Junior Hotelier Program Bearing Fruit: More Industry Speakers Needed for Schools

Early impressions are lasting impressions. That's the thinking behind the Junior Hotelier Program which BHTA established as a pilot in 2007 with Stephen Dillet Primary School. Nearly 90 students participated in three 12 week programs, learning about tourism, its range of opportunities, and meeting with industry persons from all walks. The industry volunteers in this program from various hotels and tourism-related businesses could not underestimate the value of their investments in young people.

The value of this investment of volunteer time to meet students in schools and open their doors in the workplace was underscored in April when Travis Robinson, a junior at C.R. Walker Senior High School was selected as Junior Minister of Tourism for 2013-14. Travis was in BHTA's pilot program while a primary school student and has told us that through that program he decided he wanted to work in tourism.



The outgoing Junior Minister of Tourism, Ianta Stubbs from Anatol Rodgers High School, was also a participant in BHTA's Junior Hotelier Program. She and her school have also participated in Bahamahost, and the American Hotel and Lodging Education Institute Lodging Management Certification Program. Her instructor, Janelle Cambridge, has attended BHTA's weeklong summer educator internship program for several years as well and is the recipient of the 2013 Cacique Award for Human Resources. Ianta will pursue Tourism Management Studies at COB next year, under full tuition scholarship through the Industry Partners Scholarship Program.

What we sow, so too shall we reap. The Junior Hotelier program is helping to shape our future professionals. BHTA needs more volunteers – industry leaders and role models at all levels and all fields – to touch these young lives and inspire them to take our industry to new heights. Contact Latasha at lallen@bahamashotels.org to volunteer or ask one of the shining stars in your business to spend 1-2 hours every few months in one of our school programs

School Tourism Curriculum Revised:

- **Revised Tourism Awareness Program Now in Junior High Schools**
- **Major Overhaul of High School Hospitality and Tourism Studies Curriculum Launched**

Seven years ago BHTA embarked on a partnership with the Ministry of Education to update and upgrade tourism-related curriculum in the junior high school social studies program and in the high schools Hospitality and Tourism Studies program. Workshops and sessions between industry professionals and educators were held. Educators attended our summer educator internship programs. Draft curriculum was developed and revised on several occasions based upon educator and industry feedback.

This year, the Ministry introduced new books and curriculum to the tourism component of social studies which every public school student in the nation is required to take. BHTA developed the original program with Education in 1989. The high school tourism studies program has been given a major overhaul, with considerable emphasis on customer service, skills standards, employer expectations and employment readiness. It is being piloted at several high schools in Grade 10 this year, will be refined this summer and expanded to other high schools next September when the Grade 11 pilot will be introduced.

BHTA Working with Education to Introduce Tourism BGCSE

An approach was made to the Minister for Education, Science and Technology, the Hon. Jerome Fitzgerald to support the establishment of a BGCSE National Examination in Hospitality and Tourism. The Minister supports the idea and initial meetings have been held with industry and education officials to begin planning. A tourism-related BGCSE would go a long way towards elevating the stature of our nation's largest industry with parents, students, educators and the general public. It would also provide a point of measurement for years to come, allowing us to assess progress and also further refine the new hospitality and tourism studies curriculum which has been developed by industry and the Ministry. A joint committee with the Ministry is discussing full implementation in the spring of 2017.

COB Works with BHTA to Fill Two Critical Vacancies at CHMI

With solid industry-focused leadership in place, BHTA hopes to elevate the College of The Bahamas Culinary and Hospitality Management Institute to a program rivalling and exceeding the reputation of its predecessor, the Bahamas Hotel Training College. BHTA President Boze and Immediate Past President Sandy Sands met with the College Council Chair and Deputy Chair several months ago and outlined several key steps which need to be undertaken to improve the program. At the top of the list is putting in place two critical positions: an Executive Director and a Director for Industry Training.



Working with COB President Betsy Boze and her team, BHTA representatives assisted with the development of position descriptions for the two posts. The College President invited BHTA representation on the selection advisory committee. The goal is to fill both positions by the end of July.

Industry Partners Pull Together to Ensure Certification of Apprenticeship Cooks Program

Historically, the Apprenticeship Cooks Program has been key to the development of Bahamian Chefs, resulting in over 500 becoming certified since it was established over 35 years ago. It is a partnership program between industry, the College, the Bahamas Culinary Association, and The Bahamas Hotel Catering and Allied Workers Union. BHTA has assisted over the past year with the periodic program review by the American Culinary Federation Education Institute. Initial recommendations were made during a review last year and since then all stakeholders have been addressing areas needing improvement. A coordinating team led by COB Chef Sterling Thompson and including BHTA, Bahamas Culinary Association, Atlantis, Sheraton, and Lyford Cay Club representation welcomed the ACFEI review team late last month.

COB and BHTA Complete First Line-Level Certificate Course, Two More Being Offered



PREPARE TO BECOME A PART OF THE WORLD'S LARGEST INDUSTRY...

Choose courses aimed at preparing individuals for entry-level positions in the hospitality industry.

- * BASIC CULINARY SKILLS COURSE
- * INTRO TO FOOD AND BEVERAGE COURSE

For information and registration, call 326-3316 or 323-5804 Or email: acurry@cob.edu.bs

LIMITED SPACE AVAILABLE

Working with the College of The Bahamas, last November COB introduced a pilot certificate program on Basic Culinary Skills. Presently 18 students from that program are doing internships at Sandals, the British Colonial Hilton, Breezes, the Sheraton and Atlantis and hopefully will secure employment shortly as a result of their training.

The College of the Bahamas, with support from BHTA and industry volunteers, has designed a series of certificate courses over the past year in culinary, food service, bartending, and other high demand areas. Baha Mar and Atlantis have played a key role in developing the abovementioned courses. A supervisory and management course is being planned as well. The College is presently accepting applications for the next two certificate courses which will start shortly. These will cover basic culinary skills and food service. Applications are available through the College's Continuing Education and Extension Services (CEES).

Scholarship Applications Received, More Invited

Seven students have submitted application for the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association Education Foundation awards. Presently, 8 Bahamians are attending universities under this scholarship program, receiving a total award amount of \$46,000. Applications are now being accepted for the Patrick SG Bain Industry Partners scholarship awards to attend COB during the 2013/14 school year. Seven students are currently on this scholarship receiving awards totalling \$23,500. Criteria and forms can be downloaded directly from the Scholarships Section of BHTA's website or by contacting Latasha Allen at: lallen@bahamashotels.org or 322-8381.

Pilot Reading Companion Literacy Program Underway

The Literacy Program Partnership with IBM, Project Read, the Rotary Clubs of The Bahamas, and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology was developed to mitigate the reading gap among primary school students and working professionals. To date, three schools (TG Glover, Palmdale, Akhepran) have committed to participate. Several schools have weak internet signals which are being addressed. Palmdale Primary is the only government school actively using the system with 31 students. Baseline testing has been completed in three schools. The results indicate that "most of the students require a great deal of help" and the program appears to be helping. Post-testing will be undertaken at completion of each round to measure student progress. We expect a final report on the initial pilot shortly.



BHTA and Live Mocha Continue to Offer Foreign Language Training

Focus continues to be placed on foreign language training, with BHTA, the Ministry of Tourism and COB having offered both scheduled courses and online training over the past year. Over 500 Bahamians have actively pursued these programs. Last month BHTA extended its agreement with the popular online foreign language training program, Live Mocha, which offers enrollees up to one year online subscription for \$10 per employee. The program retails for \$100 per enrollee. Members interested in participating themselves and signing up their employees should contact Latasha Allen at lallen@bahamashotels.org or 322-8381.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

CHENACT Program Launched: First 10 Hotels Audited Planned for Early Summer

In partnership with the Inter-American Development Bank, the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association, the Caribbean Tourism Organization and the Bahamas Ministry of Tourism, BHTA launched a major hotel energy efficiency project following its February meeting. Thus far 23 hotels have expressed an interest in participating in one of the 30 detailed energy audits which the project will offer. The audits are provided at no financial cost to the hotels who must pledge their cooperation in providing data and access and donate room nights into a pool to help defray the project's overall expenses. The detailed audits are valued between \$3,000 and \$6,000 depending upon the size of the hotel. The project is limited to hotels with fewer than 400 rooms.

BHTA will be commencing with the first round of detailed professional audits for participating hotels shortly. Ten have been selected, five from Harbour Island, two from Grand Bahama and three from Nassau. Once hotels provide the necessary supporting information, the audits should commence early this summer.

CHENACT Program Launched: First 10 Hotels Audited Planned for Early Summer *cont'd*

The second round will commence in the fall and will focus on several Family Islands. Hotels which have not yet submitted an interest form and are interested should contact LaToya Johnson, BHTA's project coordinator, who can be reached at chenactbahamas@gmail.com

Based upon the Inter-American Development Bank's experience with the Barbados pilot of this project, participating hotels should realize substantial savings to their energy bills with the range of no-cost, low-cost and other measures which the auditors will recommend. As well, several participating hotels will be eligible to receive grants to implement some of the recommendations. Later in the project we will also establish a 'Smart Fund' ---- providing a low-cost financing vehicle to support putting in place some of the higher cost recommendations.

Environment Minister Gives Indication of Energy Policy Changes

The Honourable Kenred Dorsett M.P., Minister of Environment and Housing declared his full support of the CHENACT Program at BHTA's launch on February 7th at the British Colonial Hilton. He pledged the Government's broader support for reducing energy costs and improving efficiencies through:

- Introducing net metering with the grid
- Introduction of a Renewable Energy Act
- Creating an independent Regulatory Entity for the Energy Sector
- Developing an Energy Unit within the Ministry of the Environment
- Further reducing Customs Duties on renewable energy equipment and devices
- Providing a credit against the Business License Tax for hotels that had energy audits performed that year
- Reviewing the existing regulatory framework for the energy sector

Advancing these initiatives would be welcome news for BHTA and its members. BHTA has advocated for several years a net metering system, additional incentives for reducing costs for energy efficient materials and equipment, and the modernization of legislation and regulations to support efficiencies.



Key Downtown Nassau Revitalization Projects Underway



BHTA's longstanding support for the revitalization of downtown Nassau is showing visible signs of success. Pompey Square, a new urban public space anchoring the west side of the heart of the city, is slated for completion next month. Marlborough Street has been transformed into a public piazza and will continue to develop as a gathering point with outdoor restaurants and cafes. New sidewalks with attractive pavers are being installed along Bay Street. This complements several retail and marina investment projects which have been completed and several more on the drawing board. Major streetscaping and beautification is on tap and transportation improvement plans are well advanced. The Government has indicated it will be extending the Downtown Revitalization Act to continue to stimulate investments. Waterfront property owners along the stretch where the commercial shipping was relocated last year are also actively working on projects

and development options. The long-talked about 'revitalization' is visibly underway.

ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Members Consider Articles Amendment to Add Ministry of Tourism and Ministry of Education Reps

Following a trend which is occurring with many associations globally and in keeping with the spirit of public-private sector collaboration which BHTA has long advanced, members will be invited in June to consider amending the organization's Articles to allow for Directorship appointments at the senior level by the Minister of Tourism and the Minister of Education. A proposed amendment will be circulated to members a month prior to the June meeting.

2013 Budget: Improving Our Bottom-Line

A combination of improved fiscal management, membership growth, the recent sale of BHTA land, and support from the Nassau Paradise Island Promotion Board has placed BHTA in a much improved fiscal situation. The 2013 budget which was adopted at the April meeting projects a slight surplus, the first time BHTA will reach this in six years. Thank you to all of our members for your ongoing support.

New Treasurer Ratified at April Meeting

President Stuart Bowe expressed appreciation for Peter Maguire's years of service as BHTA Treasurer at the April membership meeting. He tendered his resignation earlier to focus more on company and other BHTA and industry volunteer commitments. In consultation with the Executive Committee, President Bowe put forward Vaughn Roberts, Vice President for Finance with BahamaMar, to fill the post. Vaughn agreed and was ratified. He brings to the table strong accounting credentials and a background of engagement with the downtown Nassau revitalization and other community activities.



Recognizing Industry's Finest Cacique Award Winners Announced



- **BHTA President Stuart Bowe is Hotelier of the Year**
- **Hotel Associates from Cape Santa Maria, Sheraton, Wyndham, Atlantis and Grand Lucayan Capture Top Honours**
- **Educator Partner Janelle Cambridge-Johnson Chosen HR Person of the Year**

Winners of the 15th Cacique Awards came from across the length of the islands of The Bahamas when they were revealed at a black-tie affair on January 27th at the Wyndham's Rainforest Theatre. We applaud all nominees. Following are the winners by category:

- Employee of the Year - Alva Wilbert Adderley, Cape Santa Maria Resort, Long Island
- Supervisor of the Year - Renardo Sweeting, Grand Lucayan Resort, Grand Bahama
- Sales Executive of the Year - Desiree Moxey, Wyndham Nassau Resort
- Chef of the Year - Devin E. Johnson, Sheraton Nassau Beach Resort
- Manager of the Year - Ricardo Brown, Atlantis Resort

Other Categories:

- Lifetime Achievement Award - David and Phoebe Gale, Abaco
- Minister's Award for Hospitality, Elliot Green, Andros
- Transportation Award - Capt. Eugene Munroe, Nassau Harbour Pilot Association
- Human Resources Development - Janelle Cambridge-Johnson, Anatol Rogers High School
- Sustainable Tourism Development - Bimini Biological Field Station, Bimini
- Creative Arts - Merton Thompson, Andros
- Sports, Leisure & Events, Malcolm Spicer, Abaco
- International Tour Operator of the Year - Majestic Holidays
- International Writer of the Year, Skip Allen Sr.
- Airline of the Year - Copa Airlines
- Cruise Line of the Year - Carnival Cruise Line

People's Choice Music Awards:

- Adrian Edgecombe and Harvest Praise, Nassau - People's Choice (Gospel)
- Dillon McKenzie (Da Gaulin Song), Nassau - People's Choice (Secular)

Congratulations to H. Forbes Charter

Longstanding BHTA allied member H. Forbes Charter, based out of Grand Bahama, has been honoured with an Excellence Award - Five Star Rating by VIATOR. This top global experience award is given based upon customer ratings. Viator, Inc. sells tours and activities through their award-winning Viator.com website, ten local-language sites serving North and South American, European and Japanese markets, five fully optimized mobile sites and more than 2,000 affiliate sites that include major hotel chains and airlines, and online travel agencies.

Junior Minister of Tourism Selected from Incredible Field of Candidates

Fourteen student winners representing islands throughout The Bahamas went head to head in fierce competition on April 11th in a speech competition and mystery question segment to capture the distinction of being named Junior Minister of Tourism.



Junior Minister of Tourism Selected from Incredible Field of Candidates cont'd

Top honours went to Travis Robinson, a junior at C.R. Walker Senior High School. Travis's knowledge of the industry gave him the edge. Following the awards ceremony Travis told BHTA Executive Vice President Frank Comito that his inspiration to become part of the tourism industry came about six years earlier when he was a participant in BHTA's pilot Junior Hotelier Program at Stephen Dillet Primary School. At the ceremony BHTA announced that the selected Junior Minister is eligible for a four-year scholarship at the College of The Bahamas through the Pat Bain Industry Partners Scholarship Program supported by BHTA and the Bahamas Hotel Employers Association.

Outgoing Junior Minister of Tourism Ianta Stubbs from Anatol Rodgers High School, who also has participated in several school programs which BHTA has supported over the years and is a student in their hospitality and tourism studies program, indicated she hopes to attend the College of The Bahamas this fall. Should she do so, she will be eligible for the scholarship.

Anatol Rodgers and Central Andros High Schools Compete at AHLEI Annual Event

BHTA congratulates the teachers and students from the Anatol Rodgers High School and Central Andros High School for their hard work and good showing at the American Hotel and Lodging Education Institute's annual Lodging Management Competition (LMP) earlier this month in Orlando, Florida. LMP is a rigorous credentialing program designed for students who wish to enter the industry.

In addition to participating in an industry-developed course, which the instructors must be certified to deliver, students must also spend 160 hours in industry. Both schools came home with awards, with Anatol Rodgers winning a gold medal in the Hospitality Project. BHTA thanks the program's instructors – Janelle Cambridge from Anatol Rodgers and Gailey Williams at Central Andros for their outstanding dedication to the student's development. We also thank the Nassau-Paradise Island hotels and Small Hope Bay Lodge in Andros for their support with the student's training.

2013 Taste of the Caribbean Culinary Team Working Towards June Competition

Members of 2013 Taste of the Caribbean Culinary Team have been meeting weekly at the Bahamas Food Services training kitchen preparing for the June regional competition. We wish them luck. The team is planning a demonstration dinner June 18th at the One & Only Ocean Club. Details will be shared with members. This year's team consist of:

● Devin Johnson, Team Manager	Executive Chef	Sheraton Nassau Beach Hotel
● Emmanuel Gibson	Executive Chef	One & Only Ocean Club
● Simeon Hall	Corporate Chef	Solomon's Fresh Market
● Sheldon Tracey Sweeting	Private Chef	Private Chef
● Ron Johnson	Private Chef	Savory Arts
● Jamal Small	Chef	One & Only Ocean Club
● Charon McKenzie	Jr. Sous Chef	Lyford Cay Club
● Ancilleno Solomon	Jr. Executive Sous Chef	Lucianos of Chicago
● Dwayne Sinclair	Student (Jr. Chef)	Lincoln Culinary Arts Institute

Tourism Champions: Don't Lose Out on this Opportunity to Recognize Special Owners, Managers or Employees

The Nassau Guardian continues to feature our industry's 'champions' every Friday in their business section. This popular feature has served to broaden the awareness of the general public about our industry, its diverse offerings, and the importance of tourism and providing exceptional service. It has also served to motivate employees. Please help us to identify and recognize our 'Champions'. They exist in every company and every corner of our industry and who would better know who they are than you. Contact Charlotte at BHTA – cknowles-thompson@bahamashotels.org or 322-8381.

Welcome New Members!

We welcome the following members who recently joined the organization and encourage members to support members.

COMPANY	REPRESENTATIVE	CLASSIFICATION
● Sigmatex Lanier Textiles	Manish Bhandaro	Distributor of Linens
● BahamaGo	Adlai Kerr	Travel Agency
● Bahamas A Sus Ordenes	Simone Robinson-Johnson	Tour Operator-Foreign Language
● Clear Solution Plus	Charles Kemp	Air Duct Cleaning/ Vent Cleaning
● Carriearl Boutique Hotel	Martin Dronsfield	Hotel
● Bahamas Food Adventures	Benia Dean	Food Tour
● The Beck Group	Brent Ingraham	Architecture, Construction,
● Talent Solution	Pamela Rahming	Recruitment & Skills Training