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VOL. 31 - NO. 116

WEDNESDAY - JULY 24TH, 2019

75 CENTS

Wells Defends Post Office Deal

BY BERTHONY MCDERMOTT
 Journal Staff Writer

Minister of Transport and Local Government Renward Wells made a valiant attempt to defend the controversial General Post Office deal, which includes its relocation to the Town Centre Mall and a lease agreement with St. Anne's Member of Parliament Brent Symonette.

When pressed on the issue outside Cabinet yesterday morning, Wells gave a terse response to reporters.

"Listen we've signed the lease, what else is out there to be known? We told you all how much we

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▶ Minister of Transport and Local Government Renward Wells

BCPOU Files Trade Dispute Against BTC

BY DEANDRE WILLIAMSON
 Journal Staff Writer

Bahamas Communications and Public Officers Union (BCPOU) President Dino Rolle filed a trade dispute against the Bahamas Telecommunications Company (BTC) Limited on Monday.

The BCPOU filed a trade dispute with the



▶ BCPOU President Dino Rolle

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FNM Attacks PLP's 10-Year Plan

BY EARYEL BOWLEG
 Journal Staff Writer

The Free National Movement (FNM) attacked the Progressive Liberal Party's (PLP) 10-year plan describing it as "incompetent".

In a statement issued on Tuesday, the FNM

criticized the plan pointing out that it begins with massively increasing spending on party infrastructure, including new headquarters in every constituency.

"It appears new leadership could be a very

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Gov't to Address Public Transportation Issues

BY BERTHONY MCDERMOTT
 Journal Staff Writer

The deadline for the government to address the issues concerning taxi and bus drivers was extended to August, according to Minister of Transport and Local Government Renward Wells.

Yesterday, Wells said a cabinet subcommittee is also scheduled to meet this month to address the

concerns of public service drivers, which range from a lifting the moratorium on taxi plates to an increase in the bus fare.

"The prime minister in his wisdom has put together a cabinet subcommittee of about six cabinet ministers to deal with the entire transportation business," he said.

"Not just taxi cab driv-

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\$300 MILLION INVESTMENT FOR OCEAN CAY



▶ Pierfrancesco Vago, Executive Chairman, MSC Cruises addresses the media during a press conference to announce a major eco-development planned for Ocean Cay. With just under four months to go until Ocean Cay MSC Marine Reserve welcomes its first guests, a meeting was held in Nassau, between Bahamian government officials and a delegation of senior MSC Cruises representatives.. (Photo: Ronnie Archer/Barefoot Marketing)

BY LICEC BASTIAN
 Journal Staff Writer

The final stages of preparing Ocean Cay for MSC Cruises is underway and over \$300 million has

been invested in the undertakings so far.

MSC Cruises is the number one operator in Freeport for transshipment (Mediterranean Shipping Company) since

1997. The company has also been a part of the cruise division since 2004 and European Based, with some 17 cruise ships in its fleet.

With some three

months before the first guests arrive on the cay via MSC Cruises, MSC Cruises Executive Chairman Pierfrancesco

■ See page 3...





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DNA Demands Higher Physician Wages

BY EARYEL BOWLEG
Journal Staff Writer

Democratic National Alliance (DNA) Leader Arinthia Komolafe called on the government to improve the country's healthcare system by providing one year contracts for junior doctors and a better paid workforce.

Komolafe made this call during a press conference on Tuesday where she discussed the government's lack of initiatives to resolve issues such as poor medical facilities and low wages.

"We have this chal-

lenge in our healthcare system where we have brain drain. We're losing qualified professionals to developed countries like the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom because the benefits here, the salary here, working conditions here are not up to standard for qualified healthcare professions to work under," Mrs. Komolafe said.

DNA Deputy Leader Buscheme Armbrister pointed out the problem of bed shortages at the Princess Margaret Hospital.



▶ DNA Leader Arinthia Komolafe

"In ICU, they don't have any trolley, or they very seldom have trolley, to carry people from the ICU to the theater because the trolleys are being used in A&E as beds," Mr. Armbrister said.

"When we look at the wasteful spending that this government is doing, it is deplorable. We could, \$400 for a bed, but we're wasting \$9,000 on the house for the governor. Total shame! Very lucrative contracts are going to special interest, but have people in trolleys in A&E for sometimes days on

end. This cannot be accepted in the 21st century Bahamas."

Both Armbrister and Komolafe noted that these are issues that have been compounded over the years and is a global phenomenon, but the party leader insisted that responsibility must be taken to put the necessary structure in place for Bahamians.

In the upcoming months, the DNA will introduce plans to split the Bahamas into zones where different islands can be able to focus and manage their own affairs.

MSC Cruises to Transform Ocean Cay

BY LICEC BASTIAN
Journal Staff Writer

A former sand-mining and aragonite site, Ocean Cay, abandoned in 2015 was acquired by MSC Cruises, which are now working to conserve the natural elements of the property while turning it into a marine reserve.

MSC Cruise began the project in 2015 and took on the challenge to trans-

form the industrial wasteland into a marine reserve and tourist destination, at the same time investing some \$300 million.

MSC Cruises announced yesterday, that the company is committed to restoration and ongoing conservation of marine resources and made significant clean up efforts to the island and surrounding ocean bed, discarding up to 7,500 tons of scrap

metal that was transported to a dedicated U.S. based licensed waste contractor.

Matthew McKinnon, of the MSC Foundation, an independent entity, explained that the property at Ocean Cay has a degrading ecosystem and is in a declining state.

"So, for instance the conch is being exploited at unsustainable levels. The coral has had as much as 50 percent mortality in

recent years," Mr. McKinnon said.

"In the context of global environmental changes, like climate change and the warming of the waters, at this stage the reefs are basically on the way out.

"So, what we're looking to do with MSC and as MSC Foundation is to try and find a way to make use of those amazing resources of the island and

pull both the expertise of those available in The Bahamas with experts regionally, experts internationally and try and find a way to save the coral, to support its resilience so it can rebound and it can cope with changes that are to come."

Having had a team of 10 marine biologists comb the area in April, Mr. McKinnon said steps have been taken to determining

how the area will be managed.

"After we received the facts and the outcome of the assessment, we gathered a team of all of these experts on Bimini, for about a week, and we started the process to design a plan to rebound the ecosystem of the area," Mr. McKinnon said.

"We have plans to not only support the conservation, to study the restoration, but also we are exploring careers in academic partnerships with the University of The Bahamas and universities based in America, where we can train students who will participate in the conservation programme."

Engaged by MSC Cruises, with the approval from the BEST Commission, Principle of Design Elements Tanya Ferguson explained that the role of the company is the environmental management and said there has been no negative push back from environmentalists.

"I have a chain of staff that is onsite 24 hours doing environmental monitoring," Mrs. Ferguson said.

"Although this is an industrial site and at the end there will be a net positive impact, which means that instead of having a degraded impact you will have actually a net positive impact because you would have improved what you met there. Even though that's the case, in doing so there is still the chance that you can have an impact and so our role is to ensure that during the construction phase the activities associated with the project does not add to the impact.

"Because of the nature of the site, there's been

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Wells Defends

Continued from / PAGE 1...

were paying, \$14 per square foot, and its 56,000 square feet," Wells said.

"The resolution gives us the opportunity to get up to 75,000 square feet of space."

When asked again if the government intends to table the lease he said, "That's a discussion that has to be taken at another level and then we will be able to get back to you."

Wells maintained that the whole process has been transparent and that the government made the right decision.

"All of these things that were being discussed in papers and amongst you reporters were being discussed as if all of a sudden these issues were new. Everything that was spoken to in the press was spoken to in the House of Assembly," he explained. "The resolution was

put forward, transparency was given to the Bahamian people, it was debated, reports were laid, people had their say, there was a vote and we moved.

"Yet, still we have come back in this era to try and adjudicate something that was already adjudicated in the high court of Parliament.

"I want to say it again. It was adjudicated in the high court of Parliament.

Nobody was ducking under no rock or hiding anything."

The Progressive Liberal Party has been coming down heavy on the government in recent weeks in light of then sitting Cabinet Minister Brent Symonette being a part owner in the Town Centre Mall and Symonette's subsequent disclosure that he and the prime minister discussed the post office's possible

lease agreement prior to it heading to Cabinet for consideration.

Wells also maintained that the post office debacle will not be a stumbling block for the Minnis administration.

"No one disagrees that the post office is in the right place. The place where it is at is the right place," he said.

"As a matter of fact, the opposition thought that the centre where it is

was so right, they decided they didn't want to go there for whatever reason in the Town Centre Mall, so where they went?

"Did they go to the west end of the island or the east end? No they went right cross the road in the Independence Shopping Center."

According to the PLP, the party is exploring the possibility of a judicial review into the matter.

MSC Cruises to Transform

Continued from / PAGE 2...

very little [pushback], but there has been, as with everything, there has been some inquiries and almost every inquiry that was made, Michelle (McGregor) and I personally spoke with the parties involved and at the end of it they were rather pleased."

Mrs. Ferguson added that her agency has met with stakeholders as well as the surrounding com-

munities of Bimini and Coco Cay.

"We went out and we did stakeholder engagement on several levels. We did it on a community level where we had a community meeting," Mrs. Ferguson said.

"We also had persons on the ground doing interviews with persons within the community. So that's what we did on the community level. Then we had engagements from the various environmental

NGOs of The Bahamas, The Nature Conservancy, The Bahamas National Trust, the various governments Ministry of Environment, the Department of Marine Resources and also the University of The Bahamas as a key partner, Cape Eleuthera, Center for Oceanic Research (COR).

"So, there was extensive engagement with local environment community just to get feed-

back and to find the possible right fit for the partnership when it comes to the management aspect of it.

"MSC creates a wonderful opportunity to show how an area if properly managed what results can happen, but it's also unique because it is a first opportunity for a private partnership cooperation for something like this, so all around it's a very unique project."

Ocean Cay Marine

Reserve will host over half a million tourists annually.

The MSC Marine Reserve Bahamas anticipates being a low impact island nearly completely solar, with a solar farm that will produce up to 600KW which will allow for the island to be operated without any other source of energy when the ship is not in port.

According to Gianluca Suprani, SVP Port Development and

Shoreline Activities for MSC Cruises, there are plans to use bio-diesel to operate generators which will allow for minimal impact.

Use of a water well, sent to an advanced filtration system producing up to 120,000 gallons of fresh water and the use of solar electric cars throughout the cay as well as the ban of the single use of plastic are all features of the MSC Marine Reserve at Ocean Cay.

\$300 MILLION INVESTMENT FOR OCEAN CAY

Continued from / PAGE 1...

Vago said yesterday that the company is committed to creating a paradise for tourists.

According to Mr. Vago, what started out as an \$80 million venture now exceeds \$300 million in investments.

"I want to tell you what an incredible story it has been to turn this site that was contaminated, that was full of waste material, that we found all kinds of things inside, from oil, from residual, even residual of old planes in the sand, we did an incredible job to actually restore it," Mr. Vago said.

"Once we restored it,

once we reshaped it, once we started cleaning, we started shaping exactly what the design of the island was going to be. So from an industrial to a paradise, back to nature."

Since the 1970s, Ocean Cay has been an industrial area with aragonite harvesting.

With the full backing of the government, MSC plans to employ more than 100 Bahamians, according to Ocean Cay General Manager Michelle McGregor.

"We've been working with the Department of Labour, the National Training Agency, in Freeport and in Nassau, to really try to get as many

Bahamians as we can for the different expertise we have available and positions we have available on site," Mrs. McGregor said.

"We've been so lucky, we've had hundreds of applicants and we've probably have chosen 200 of them that we still need to now narrow down because I only have about 140 positions. I was able to find about 120 Bahamians that we'll be able to place onsite."

Ocean Cay Marine Reserve anticipates opening November 9, 2019.

MSC plans to invest \$5 million over the next 10 years to further restore the island's ecosystem.

Gov't to Address Public Transportation Issues

Continued from / PAGE 1...

ers, but bus drivers, delivery drivers, but to deal with Road Traffic, so we can have one cohesive policy that is both accepted by the government of The Bahamas and more so bought into by the Bahamian people and bought into by those persons who are involved in the transportation business."

Public service drivers had imposed on the government a July 1 deadline to

have their issues resolved.

Bahamas Taxi Cab Union President Wesley Ferguson said given all the government has on its plate right now, coupled with the minister's only just returning to the country, he has no issues with the new deadline.

"Granted that Minister Wells is basically a new minister of transport, we are working hand and hand to try to make them understand that it's not a quick fix and at the same token we have given him an opportu-

nity to address some of the issues that he promised he would have addressed by now," Ferguson said.

"However, without being barbaric and without being for lack of a better word antsy about going ahead, we've just given them a little leeway to make good on his promises."

Ferguson has however made it clear that if nothing's resolved by the August deadline, the union will have little choice but to up the ante.



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BCPOU Files Trade Dispute Against BTC

Continued from / PAGE 1...

Ministry of Labour citing BTC's failure to negotiate in good faith on the proposed voluntary separation packages (VSEP).

According to Rolle, "This action is contrary to the Collective Bargaining Agreement, namely article 4.7 which suggests that negotiations should ensue with the unions, before a formal proposal is made to the staff."

Rolle pointed out that BTC CEO Gary Sinclair has yet to complete the negotiations with the unions relative to the VSEP packages being offered

"More seriously, we have not signed any Industrial Agreement with BTC," he said.

"The truth is a foreign concept to BTC's CEO, Gary Sinclair.

"On Friday, July 19, Mr. Sinclair emailed me and very pointedly stated in his email, that he is 'respectfully concluding our consultative discussions' and he will be moving ahead with the launch of the VSEP program at BTC in the coming days. You can't get clearer than that.

"Unfortunately, it seems as though Mr. Sinclair was attempting to deter the unions and had hoped that

we would have gone away quietly and forfeited the rights of our members. Now he's stating in the dailies this week that BTC is only in the 'planning phase' of its VSEP program."

Rolle indicated that he's confident that following the normal processes, the Ministry of Labour will provide a hearing and arbitration date, bringing BTC back to the negotiation table.

"Our only aim is to ensure that our members are treated fairly and offered equitable packages commensurate with their years of service. Additionally, we have to

be very deliberate with our actions to ensure that the VSEP packages are designed appropriately. Primarily because pensionable individuals accepting the packages will be transitioning a financial burden to the already multimillion dollar mounting debt of the public purse, subsequently the Bahamian people. This is an unfortunate position which carelessly came about under the terms of the BTC sale to CWC," Rolle said.

"I find the actions of the BTC CEO, Mr. Sinclair to be most disingenuous. You can't treat the staff with disdain, call them inefficient and 'dead wood'

behind closed doors and call for unity in the public face.

"Staff can't be efficient when they are not provided with the tools to perform their job functions. This business has not made any major capital investments in BTC for almost five years. As a part of the shareholders agreement, CWC is paid a 2 percent management fee to manage BTC. They need to do their jobs. It's appalling that all advanced level activities for the technical departments, namely IT and engineering have been outsourced to Miami. Local technicians must also rely and coordinate

with external persons from Barbados, Jamaica and Curacao to offer simple services to our customers.

"This isn't globalization. This is CWC's clever way of reducing costs and removing jobs from Bahamians."

However, Rolle pointed out that the unions are committed to their efforts of negotiating what's best for its members and urged Sinclair to spend less time trying to sway public opinion and more time building internal consensus with his teams.

"Only then will we see a true shift in the culture at BTC," he said.

FORM B
Notice of Intended Marriage
(Section 7(3))

The persons named and described hereunder have given notice to me of their intended marriage, namely --

Clifford Simon Clark, Single,
of 17 Springvale Avenue, Brentford TW8 9QH, Great Britain (UK)

and

Monika Milcarz, Divorced,
of 17 Springvale Avenue, Brentford TW8 9QH, Great Britain (UK)

Any person knowing any just cause or impediment why this marriage should not be allowed should enter caveat forthwith in the office of the Registrar of Marriages.

Dated this 30th day of May, 2019.

[Signature]
Registrar of Marriages

FORM B
Notice of Intended Marriage
(Section 7(3))

The persons named and described hereunder have given notice to me of their intended marriage, namely --

Lawrence William Ludwig, Single,
of 3814 SE 12th Place, Cape Coral FL 33904, United States of America

and

Isabella Dawn Lanzante, Single,
of 3814 SE 12th Place, Cape Coral FL 33904, United States of America

Any person knowing any just cause or impediment why this marriage should not be allowed should enter caveat forthwith in the office of the Registrar of Marriages.

Dated this 19th day of July, 2019.

[Signature]
Registrar of Marriages

FORM B
Notice of Intended Marriage
(Section 7(3))

The persons named and described hereunder have given notice to me of their intended marriage, namely --

Lon Daniel McPhail, Divorced,
of 7062 Cantaberra Ct., San Diego 92129, United States of America

and

Deanne Christine Lewis, Divorced,
of 7062 Cantaberra Ct., San Diego 92129, United States of America

Any person knowing any just cause or impediment why this marriage should not be allowed should enter caveat forthwith in the office of the Registrar of Marriages.

Dated this 22nd day of February, 2019.

[Signature]
Registrar of Marriages

FORM B
Notice of Intended Marriage
(Section 7(3))

The persons named and described hereunder have given notice to me of their intended marriage, namely --

Jason Paul Arnold, Single,
of 16116 Arrowhead Trl, Clermont FL 34711, United States of America

and

Alyssa Brooke Hill, Single,
of 16116 Arrowhead Trl, Clermont FL 34711, United States of America

Any person knowing any just cause or impediment why this marriage should not be allowed should enter caveat forthwith in the office of the Registrar of Marriages.

Dated this 5th day of July, 2019.

[Signature]
Registrar of Marriages

FORM B
Notice of Intended Marriage
(Section 7(3))

The persons named and described hereunder have given notice to me of their intended marriage, namely --

Isaiah John Daniels, Single,
of 1747 S.Spring Creek Dr, Lehi Utah 84043, United States of America

and

Lailani Aka Anderton, Single,
of 1747 S.Spring Creek Dr, Lehi Utah 84043, United States of America

Any person knowing any just cause or impediment why this marriage should not be allowed should enter caveat forthwith in the office of the Registrar of Marriages.

Dated this 11th day of July, 2019.

[Signature]
Registrar of Marriages

FORM B
Notice of Intended Marriage
(Section 7(3))

The persons named and described hereunder have given notice to me of their intended marriage, namely --

John Alexander Zambo, Single,
of 14676 Senera Trail, Middleburg Heights OH 44130, United States of America

and

Andria Lynn Bazilevich, Single,
of 14676 Senera Trail, Middleburg Heights OH 44130, United States of America

Any person knowing any just cause or impediment why this marriage should not be allowed should enter caveat forthwith in the office of the Registrar of Marriages.

Dated this 11th day of July, 2019.

[Signature]
Registrar of Marriages