Major GB Oil Spill

An estimated 1.9 million barrels of crude oil or 75 million gallons of oil was spilled from Equinor’s oil facility in Grand Bahama, according to Minister of the Environment and Housing Romuald Ferreira. While speaking to reporters yesterday, Ferreira added that 6,000 barrels or 252,000 gallons of oil has been recovered.

Various Sources to Fund New Ministry

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Peter Turnquest admitted yesterday that funding for the new Ministry of Disaster Preparedness, Management and Reconstruction will call for various sources.

Love 97 Celebrates 25 Years of Broadcasting

Love 97 FM celebrates its 25th Silver Jubilee Anniversary. Jones Communications Network CEO Wendall Jones and staff celebrated the milestone on Tuesday during a cake cutting ceremony.

PM Insulating Himself

Opposition Leader Philip Davis insisted that the prime minister is “insulating himself from criticism and culpability” associated with the new Ministry of Disaster Preparedness, Management and Reconstruction. Davis said on Tuesday, during the Progressive Liberal Party’s press conference, that Prime Minister Dr. Hubert Minnis is “passing the buck” of his primary responsibility to a junior minister.

Love 97 Celebrates 25 Years of Broadcasting

Love 97 FM celebrates its 25th Silver Jubilee Anniversary. Jones Communications Network CEO Wendall Jones and staff celebrated the milestone on Tuesday during a cake cutting ceremony.
Ly placed poor, but well intentioned, Iram Lewis on his back to absorb much of the public backlash intended for him. Mr. Lewis is now the new ‘Dorian whipping boy,’ Davis said.

Lewis is the Central Grand Bahama member of parliament and the prime minister appointed him as the minister of state responsible for the new ministry.

“It only adds to the expenses of the government. It is a waste of public resources, financial and otherwise. What we need is structural and functional reform of NEMA. That entity must become an autonomous and fully resourced corporate sole entity,” Davis said.

“This new ministry is nothing more than an additional layer of bureaucracy that will cause more and longer delays thus deepening the frustration, anger feelings of hopelessness among our already distressed people. This will only add to the delays and create more confusion.

“As the management and accounting systems are already in place to facilitate this tax concession policy, the government need only tweak it, making it specific and relevant to the needs of the Abaco community,” Davis said.

“Concerning real property tax, there is no real property tax for Bahamians residing outside of New Providence. Therefore, the prime minister’s statement is confusing concerning the circumstances surrounding this exemption for foreigners who live, own property and businesses in the affected areas. This requires some clarification.”

The opposition further charged that given the extent of the damage sustained to Grand Bahama’s businesses, the government’s allocation of $10 million is not enough and the government should give at least $100 million.

Approximately 70,000 people in Grand Bahama and Abaco will benefit from post hurricane tax waivers and incentives, according to Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Peter Turnquest.

Turnquest told reporters yesterday that a group from the international community will soon be in the country to calculate the exact number.

“They will be here on October 1. So October 1 and 2, they will be flying into the affected areas to do the economic assessments and we should have a report shortly thereafter,” he said.

The deputy prime minister added that the order is simply awaiting his signature.

“The order is actually on my desk to sign. We’re doing a few tweaks to it today, we’ll get a bit of clarification on a couple of points so that we make sure we have the document drafted as the prime minister has intended,” Turnquest said.

“So hopefully if not today, certainly tomorrow or Thursday the latest, I imagine, we will have that order out in detail with the details behind it so that people would access the various incentives that are available in that order. Abaco and Grand Bahama have been deemed special economic recovery zones for the next three years.

70,000 to Benefit from Hurricane Tax Waivers

BY BERTHELEY MCDERMOTT Journal Staff Writer

The opposition held a press conference yesterday to discuss the government’s post hurricane relief and restoration efforts. (Photo/PLP)
Love 97 Celebrates 25 Years

BY DARYL BOW LEY
Journal Staff Writer

Love 97 FM, a subsidiary of Jones Communications Network, celebrated its 25th anniversary on Tuesday.

When the first show aired on the radio station 25 years ago, CEO Wendall Jones said Love 97 “shall at all times strive not only for technical excellence, but also for fairness, decency and objectivity in the presentation of all the station’s programs.”

Mr. Jones embarked on a journey “to transform broadcasting for the better by offering programming which will enhance the social, religious, economic and political well-being of the country.”

“It has been a long journey, but it has been quite a fulfilling experience for not only myself and a number of people who’ve been associated with Jones Communications and Love 97 over the last 25 years,” he said.

“We started with a very small staff doing radio and we became quickly a very dominant radio station because at that time, there were only a few probably three in the country and then we grew into Grand Bahama.”

Some may know of the station’s programs like Issues of the Day and Jones and Company, but Love 97 has the reputation for training some of the best journalists in the country, which Mr. Jones highlighted of the station’s legacy.

“Those people who come through our doors. They must subscribe to very high standards and many of them come from colleges and universities,” he said.

“They come with theoretical knowledge, but we ensure they have the kind of practical experience to do the kind of work they ought to do.

“Another good thing about it is that in this media enterprise, you are involved in the production of news for radio, television, as well as newspaper. So you are a well-rounded journalist by the time you leave Jones Communications.”

Love 97 thanks the public for tuning in for over two decades.

Gibson’s Trial Delayed Again

BY LICEC BASTIAN
Journal Staff Writer

The criminal trial for former Progressive Liberal Party (PLP) Member of Parliament Shane Gibson was delayed for a second day after prosecutors and Gibson’s attorneys spent the better part of Tuesday morning conducting pre-trial arguments.

For nearly four hours, the attorneys were engaged in those pre-trial arguments before Justice Carolita Bethel. Yesterday was also expected to be the start of jury selection. However, that too did not take place as potential jurors were taken into court shortly after midafternoon for jury selection, but just after noon were dismissed.

Although it was confirmed by Gibson’s lawyer Damian Gomez, QC, that a gag order remains in effect, The Bahamas Journal understands that yesterday’s proceedings will have a preliminary legal issue argued.

The former minister of labour and national insurance was in August 2017 arraigned in Magistrate’s Court on two counts of conspiracy to commit extortion, two counts of conspiracy to commit bribery, 16 counts of bribery, 15 counts of extortion and one count of misconduct while in public office.

It is alleged that while serving as a Cabinet minister, Gibson received $410,000 from contractor Jonathan Ash to speed up the process of payment related to clean up efforts after Hurricane Matthew in 2016.

The extortion charges were later withdrawn by the Crown. The former PLP MP is being represented by Keith Knight, QC, from Jamaica, Damian Gomez, QC, Owen Wells and Philip McKenze. James Guthrie, QC, from England leads the Crown assisted by Destiny McKinney and Terry Archer from the Attorney General’s Office.

Gibson returns to court on Thursday.
“Of the 6,000 barrels collected, some of it can be reused. But of course, it’s going to have to be reproduced because it may be mixed with water and other debris,” he said.

“There is about 12,000 cubic yards of debris that will be shipped out of the country for disposal at the Basel Convention because under the convention, we have to confirm what we are actually sending to the U.S. and they have to agree to accept it. But it will be disposed of out of the country.”

“There is about 750 cubic yards of contaminated soil and rock aggregate because the Bahamas doesn’t have much soil. So anytime you scrape soil, you always scrape rock. That mixture will be treated by way of deliberate injection of microbes and aeration and disposed of at the Grand Bahama land fill.”

Ferreira added that Equinor has quadrupled its staff to address the situation.

“They went from having a staff of about 50. Now they have 208 plus persons on the ground involved in recovery and remediation,” he said.

“The personnels are housed in two offshore vessels that are on site. The equipment that has been brought, includes skimmers, suction to boats and skimmers, they have about 13 vacuum trucks, two helicopters and of course, two boats. So that’s ongoing. So that’s a team. The ambient air, there is also to protect the recovery team, is being monitored for benzene.”

“Their fore one component that’s not safe to breathe. That’s being monitored by an external monitoring team for independent verification.”

“In terms of cleanup costs and just how much Equinor has lost, that’s still been undisclosed.”

“Equinor is investigating the impact the spill may have had on the environment.”

“So far, they did extensive aerial surveillance and they did some sort of a mapping of the areas that we were interested in, as far as we were interested in the areas of interest, but they turned out to be overestimated.”

“They used visual and infrared technology to do their scans. On land, we can confirm that one goose and three birds were impacted by the spill.”

“Not to fund the ministry, let’s be clear, but to ensure the ministry will provide.”

Ferreira said.

Godfrey said so far, they have spent over 750 cubic yards of contaminated soil and rock, which oversaw the regression of the impact on the sea. That mixture will be treated by way of delusion injection of microbes and aeration and disposed of at the Grand Bahama landfill. Ferreira added that Equinor has quadrupled its staff to address the situation.”

“There is about 12,000 cubic yards of debris that will be shipped out of the country for disposal at the Basel Convention because under the convention, we have to confirm what we are actually sending to the U.S. and they have to agree to accept it. But it will be disposed of out of the country.”

“There is about 750 cubic yards of contaminated soil and rock aggregate because the Bahamas doesn’t have much soil. So anytime you scrape soil, you always scrape rock. That mixture will be treated by way of deliberate injection of microbes and aeration and disposed of at the Grand Bahama land fill.”

Ferreira added that Equinor has quadrupled its staff to address the situation. They went from having a staff of about 50. Now they have 208 plus persons on the ground involved in recovery and remediation,” he said.

“The personnels are housed in two offshore vessels that are on site. The equipment that has been brought, includes skimmers, suction to boats and skimmers, they have about 13 vacuum trucks, two helicopters and of course, two boats. So that’s ongoing. So that’s a team. The ambient air, there is also to protect the recovery team, is being monitored for benzene.”

“Their fore one component that’s not safe to breathe. That’s being monitored by an external monitoring team for independent verification.”

“In terms of cleanup costs and just how much Equinor has lost, that’s still been undisclosed.”

“Equinor is investigating the impact the spill may have had on the environment.”

“So far, they did extensive aerial surveillance and they did some sort of a mapping of the areas that we were interested in, as far as we were interested in the areas of interest, but they turned out to be overestimated. They used visual and infrared technology to do their scans. On land, we can confirm that one goose and three birds were impacted by the spill.”

“Their fore one component that’s not safe to breathe. That’s being monitored by an external monitoring team for independent verification.”

“In terms of cleanup costs and just how much Equinor has lost, that’s still been undisclosed.”

“Equinor is investigating the impact the spill may have had on the environment.”

“So far, they did extensive aerial surveillance and they did some sort of a mapping of the areas that we were interested in, as far as we were interested in the areas of interest, but they turned out to be overestimated. They used visual and infrared technology to do their scans. On land, we can confirm that one goose and three birds were impacted by the spill.”