

New Year, New Idea

Happy New Year to all our readers. Our big idea for the New Year – let's look forward to 6 August 2012, our 50th Independence Birthday. Jamaica's Olympic Team will be here. What a chance to "Showcase the Best of Jamaica". Details later.

Green shoots for the economy?

A gain of 21,000 jobs was seen in the middle of 2010, mostly in wholesale/retail plus transport/communications. And tourism is now gaining.



Remarkably, Jamaica is seeing car exports grow. Excel Motors Ltd in Westmoreland is preparing to export its Island Cruiser (pictured) to the Turks and Caicos Islands. Having first been exported to the Bahamas in 2003, the car is now impressing other islands with its quality and durability.

Both New Kingston and downtown are seeing gains. In December, Mother's opened its first bakery, in Devon House - a boutique pastry shop with 30 new jobs. And downtown, Sweet Tings opened with 60 items of bread and cakes.

Plans in the pipeline look promising. Digicel announced it is to relocate downtown in a brand new building (see page 3). And, just off the press, the Canadian group Cemcorp is applying to build a US\$340 million cement clinker plant at Port Esquivel, St Catherine. Using red mud created by the bauxite company Windalco, the aim is to export three-quarters of the annual 1.5 million tons of cement. The plan will also massively boost quarrying in Clarendon.

Proverbs

Our proverbs to you for the New Year are:

HOG SAY, 'DE FIRST DUTTY WATER MI KETCH, MI WASH'
Make use of the first opportunity that comes your way

EVEN IF YOU ARE ON THE RIGHT TRACK, IF YOU ARE NOT MOVING YOU WILL BE RUN OVER

Please send us your favourite proverbs, to feature in the next BHI Newsletter. **Send to: lillalee@bhj-ltd.com**

Tourism looking good

Readers of travel magazine "Recommend" have voted Jamaica the Caribbean's Best Selling Destination. That's for the 11th year in a row! And visits are up - in the first two weeks of 2011, Jamaica saw a 14% growth in tourist stopovers compared to 2010. On top of all that, the government are targeting the emerging economies like Brazil and Russia.



Airlines changing

Caribbean Airlines may have taken over Air Jamaica. But early signs look positive, with the company planning to run four direct flights a week to London Heathrow in the summer. In parallel, a new open skies deal with Canada has brought a rush of applicants to fly to Jamaica from across Canada.

Airports growing

Completion of work to turn Boscobel Aerodrome into Ian Fleming International Airport is a boost for the north and east. Completion of new warehousing at Norman Manley International Airport that has nearly doubled capacity is helping to boost exports, especially from agriculture.

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January 2011

For Your Positive Connection To Jamaica

Issue 4

Focus on Manchester

Each issue of BHI News focuses on a parish. Last month we had Clarendon and now we bring you Manchester.



Courthouse, Mandeville

Manchester is the sixth largest parish and the birthplace of one of the seven National Heroes – Norman Manley. Mandeville is the only parish capital not on the coast or on a major river. Of the 190,000 parish population, 30,000 live in Mandeville. Known as “the bread basket of Jamaica”, Manchester is the centre of bauxite mining.

Other well known people from the parish include athletes Donovan Bailey and Charmaine Crooks, reggae musicians Garnett Silk and Winston McAnuff, and actress Sheryl Lee Ralph. Also, there is GMTV’s Mr Motivator, Derrick Evans, who now lives in St Ann and runs H’Evans Scent in Freehill, near Bamboo – an experience that is bringing many rave reviews.

Over the Christmas and New Year period, Manchester saw islandwide attention following a TVJ report on the plight of Gheeta Morgan and her eight children in Moravia. Unable to work since August following a chop to the head, Gheeta attracted much Christmas spirit. Five of the children are now being looked after by other villagers, the public are sending donations to Scotia Bank and the police have taken her food, clothes and a cellphone.

Mentoring needs you

Before the end of 2010, at the Pegasus hotel, six young Jamaicans received certificates for mentoring. The Youth Opportunities Unlimited programme has trained over 1,400 mentors, plus 40 organisations to set up their own mentoring programmes. YOU links caring adults with young people to provide care guidance, positive role models, emotional support and counselling. The Executive Director, Georgia Scott, wants to encourage more male mentors to participate in the programme.

Dr Tufton and his medicine for agriculture

Coffee. A downturn in sales of coffee to Jamaica’s biggest customer - Japan – is bad news. But Agriculture Minister Christopher Tufton is fighting hard to gain new markets. His Ministry took out a \$305m loan to help coffee dealers to purchase the rest of this year’s crop from farmers. He is trying to find new markets and the Coffee Industry Board has signed a deal with a US company to market to luxury US hotels. Bigger and better marketing plans are being planned for the US, Europe and China, as well as for Japan.



Sugar cane. Dr Tufton has launched a massive drive to get idle land into cane production. He is talking to private landowners in Westmoreland and Clarendon to secure land that is not currently being used. And he is trying to get the Development Bank of Jamaica to release 2,000 acres of land it owns in Montpelier, St James. The Chinese company COMPLANT has planted 730 acres at its three estates – Frome, Bernard Lodge and Monymusk. The Long Pond and Hampden estates in Trelawny have also undertaken massive cane re-planting.

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Bolt lights up Trelawny

The dilapidated health centre in Sherwood Content was closed down in May. In early December, Usain Bolt officially opened the new centre. Funding came from the proceeds of Bolt's 9.58 Party in St Ann. He partnered with the Trelawny Health Department and five businesses.

Bolt said: "To give back to the community is always an honour....It is my way of showing my community that I still care, still love them....So I will continue working hard to try to big up Sherwood as much as possible."

Earlier in the day, Bolt visited his old schools - the William Knibb Memorial School, Piedmont Basic School - for which he had installed electricity - and Waldensia Primary - for which he pledged to replace the computers stolen in June from the \$2m resource room donated by Digicel.



We at BHJ have close links to Sherwood and Bolt. Our leader, Lillalee Wright (pictured outside the school, above) attended Waldensia. Until December, her cousin was the headteacher. A niece and a nephew were in Bolt's class. For the last year, BHJ has been sponsoring Saturday School for some local pupils. Now we are discussing more help - maybe partnering Bolt?

Fewer road fatalities

By 30 December, deaths on Jamaica's roads totalled 315. This was a considerable improvement on the 347 of 2009 - though missing the 300 target. The government is now considering surveillance cameras at trouble spots, plus prosecution for driving while using a mobile.

Business moving Downtown

Good news for the drive to encourage business back downtown. Digicel has announced that its new global HQ will be on the Kingston waterfront. An 11-storey tower will include 155,000 square foot of office space plus a 7,000 square foot food court. Set to open in mid-2012, the development will cost \$5.6 billion (US\$65 million).

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has also announced that it will be moving to the waterfront west of the Digicel site. Construction will begin quite soon on the US\$15 million Chinese-backed project.



Digicel is receiving undisclosed tax relief from the Government. But already the move is encouraging other investors to buy up property downtown. Guardsman Group has just purchased the Caribbean Fencing property in Breezy Castle from the Urban Development Corporation. Work is set to begin early this year. Investors are also attracted by the prospect of the Government creating an off-shore, low tax centre on the waterfront.

Whereas commercial property costs between \$3,000 and \$5,000 per square foot downtown, secondary locations in New Kingston cost from \$5,000 to \$10,000 per sq ft and start at \$10,000 per sq ft around Knutsford Boulevard.

In late December, the Government gave further encouragement to move to downtown Kingston and other urban areas, with the passing of the Urban Renewal and Tax Relief Amendment Act. Approved developers will be exempted from stamp duty and transfer tax when acquiring land.

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New local housing

COMPLANT, the Chinese company that has bought three sugar estates (see page 2) will start building 3,500 houses from February. These are funded by a \$6.5 billion loan from China on condition that COMPLANT is the builder. About 1,200 housing units and lots will be built at Belair and Mount Edgcombe in St Ann. Some 850 are set for Luana in St Elizabeth.

Meanwhile, ground was broken at a 1,385 home project at Holland, 2 miles from Falmouth, Trelawny. And PM Golding broke ground on a 2,626 home site in Runaway Bay, St Ann. Again, the housing is for low to middle income earners. The Housing Ministry is pressing for more sites like this to prevent extra service sector jobs on the north coast leading to new informal settlements.

Does seeing all this development happening inspire you to achieve the dream of your own built-to-order Jamaica home? If so, contact Bespoke Homes Jamaica for your safe passage home.

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