

HERITAGE TOURISM & OPSR ASSIST YACHTING SECTOR

Castries: October 7, 2006

September has been a good month for the Yachting Sector. The Heritage Tourism Programme of the Ministry of Tourism held an orientation seminar as a prelude to a training programme for St. Lucia's "boat boys" at the National Insurance Conference centre on Sept 30th. Funded under the Private Sector Development Programme of the Office of Private Sector Relations (OPSR) in the Prime Minister's Office, this training was identified in the Ministry's Strategic Plan for the Yachting Sector as an important component of the institutional arrangements required to facilitate orderly development and service delivery offered by the industry.



The gathering was welcomed by Ms. Lyndell Danzie-Black of the Cruise & Yachting Desk of the Ministry, followed by addresses by Rodney Bay Marina General Manager Cuthbert Didier, Marine Industries Association of St. Lucia President Keats Compton, and keynote speaker Allen Chastanet, President of the St. Lucia Hotel & Tourism Association. In a lively exchange with participants, Mr. Chastanet challenged them to define and live the St. Lucia brand image of "Simply Beautiful", and to remember that they were in the forefront of creating a favourable image of St. Lucia with their customers. He also reminded them that Tourism is now our biggest foreign exchange earner, and that the industry affects the livelihood of a very wide cross-section of all of our communities – hence the SLHTA's concept of embracing 'village tourism'.

The programme will cover the following topics: ***Introduction to Tourism, Small Business Management, Safety at Sea, First Aid and CPR, and Service Delivery.***

The Sir Arthur Lewis Community College will deliver the training which will be provided at a nominal cost to about 120 participants from the Marigot, Rodney Bay, Soufriere and Vigie Cove areas. Participants will be certified by the Ministry & Sir Arthur on completion. Mr. Didier undertook to inform ARC participants of this new feature, reminding them of the need to preserve the group's reputation but staying within the law; Mr. Compton urged them to band into groups by location, and to select representatives to obtain full membership in the MIASL. They will also be provided with a web presence on the MIASL website.

The Ministry has expressed a willingness to share the experiences gained from staging this programme with neighbouring countries, through the auspices of the Caribbean Marine Association, as the trade has identified a 'boat-boy' problem, which the programme is expected to redress.

The OPSR has also provided a grant to the MIASL for the purchase of computers and peripherals. This was also identified in the Strategic Plan for the institutional strengthening of the MIASL.