

July 31st 2020

Sandals Beaches Resort is now with us

Introduction

Last week the ULP administration stole a march on the NDP, and persons who are actively opposed to the policies of the ULP, by concluding an agreement with the Jamaica based Sandals Beaches hotel chain, in respect of the failed Buccama Resort. The hotel project, which was once in liquidation, was purchased by the Jamaica based company, from the government of St.Vincent and the Grenadines.

Readers will remember that the Buccama Resort had been placed in receivership by the courts of St.Vincent and the Grenadines, with the firm of KPMG being appointed by the court, as the receiver. Readers will also remember the issues which the receiver had to grapple with, the body of English investors who claimed that they had property at Buccama, and all the court drama reported in the local media.

All that is over with, and the ownership issues are done with. The government of SVG is the sole owner of Buccama. In fact the July 21st 2020 issue of the government Gazette states that 46.82 acres of land at Buccament, were acquired from Harlequin Property SVG Limited, in bankruptcy. So the matter of land issues related to titles and taxes, have been settled, clearing the way for the agreement with Sandals Beaches.

The New Project

The Beaches Hotel project is a product of the Sandals group. Where the Sandals group is well known as a holiday destination for couples, the Beaches brand will be a holiday destination for the family. Once operational, the Beaches project will offer what can be described as “a multigenerational family experience”.

Already Sandals is advertising its new facility on its website, urging readers to “get ready for a new family getaway on the pristine white sand beaches of St. Vincent and the Grenadines”. This is exciting stuff and the future looks really great, even at this early stage.

The Sandals Group will return to the Buccament beach area with its construction officials, with all the designs etc, to begin the required construction work. Sandals officials say that at the height of its construction, it will require some eight hundred Vincentian workers, including carpenters, masons, plumbers and electricians. Already workmen in the area stretching from North Leeward to West Kingstown are excited about the prospect of work and job creation. This also sends a signal to the opposition New Democratic Party, as to which political party is serious about

providing jobs for the people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Already, Luzette King, a leading activist for the NDP, is looking for support to send a letter to the Sandals Group, urging them not to invest in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

It is clear to all concerned that the unpatriotic NDP is not worried about providing jobs for the people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Their main strategy is to sell Vincentian passports, as they continue their race to the bottom of the ocean. That is why Vincentians are waiting to teach them a lesson, when the Comrade rings the bell, before the end of the year.

The other aspect of the Sandals Beaches brand that we have to be mindful of, is the amount of local produce the facility will consume. Already Sandals officials have said that the new facility at Buccama will require some 700,000 pounds of vegetables and fruits annually, and this will be purchased from local farmer. In addition, the facility will consume some 82,000 pounds of pineapples, 48,000 pounds of bananas, 555,000 of eggs, and 90,000 pounds of fish. These numbers are staggering, and speaks to the creation of a local industry, or a series of industries, to supply the Beaches facility.

All this is good for our local business community, who will be tasked with providing the facility with produce grown by local farmers. When the facility becomes operational in another two years or so, it will require some 700 workers to meet its daily operational requirements. There will be jobs for room attendants, cooks, waiters and bar men, and security guards, and the list goes on.

Tourism: the transformational sector

With the opening of the Argyle International Airport, the Tourism Industry is the major economic sector in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. It is clear that Tourism is now the provider of quality jobs, and will play a critical role in the development of the country's standard of living.

The construction of the International Airport has been an existential dream for all Vincentians. It is a virtual game changer, and an important cog in the development process in the country. Without a doubt, the airport has played a major role in the projects related to Sandals Beaches, the Marriot Hotel, the Holiday Inn project and the Royal Mill project now under construction.

It is clear that the country requires more hotel rooms on the mainland, and the airport will play a critical role in this area. The future of tourism development in the country looks very bright.

The year 2019 was a positive year for tourism development in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and in 2020 the future looks exceedingly good. Expect to see some construction work commencing on the Holiday Inn Express resort in the south of the country, providing more jobs for construction workers in the State.

Conclusion

The Community College at Villa is currently preparing some 250 Vincentians students for associate degrees in the areas of Hospitality Studies, Tourism and Culinary Arts. It's all part of the process of preparing our people for expanding roles within the tourism industry, in preparing for Sandals Beaches and the Holiday Inn Express. We are getting ready!!!