

LOCAL E-TIMES

NEWS, VIEWS & HIGHLIGHTS ON LOCAL GOVERNANCE & LOCAL GOVERNMENT

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ADULT TRANSITIONAL FACILITY TO BE BUILT IN KINGSTON

JIS NEWS:

From left: Councillor Andrew Swaby, Minority Leader at the Kingston and St. Andrew Municipal Corporation; Senator Councillor Delroy Williams, Mayor of Kingston & St. Andrew; Honourable Desmond McKenzie, Minister of Local Government and Community Development; Reverend Astor Carlyle of the Webster Memorial Church and Mr. Omar Sweeney, Managing Director of the Jamaica Social Investment Fund (JSIF) break ground on November 11, 2019.

Kingston: A state-of-the-art Adult Transitional Facility is to be built at a cost of nearly \$140 million to serve homeless persons in Kingston and St. Andrew.

Minister of Local Government

and Community Development, Honourable Desmond McKenzie, on Monday (November 11) broke ground for the Centre at 163-167 King Street, downtown Kingston. The facility, to be operated and managed by the Kingston and St. Andrew Municipal Corporation (KSAMC), will be the first

of its kind in Jamaica. It will offer temporary care to members of the homeless population. Through treatment and intervention provided, persons will be reintegrated into the society. Minister McKenzie in his address at the ground-breaking said that the Government is committed to providing support for the less fortunate in the society, including the homeless.

He said that the National Solid Waste Management Authority (NSWMA) will be responsible for the maintenance of the grounds of the compound.

For his part, Mayor of Kingston and St. Andrew, Senator Delroy Williams, said establishment of the facility will better enable the municipal authority to manage the problems of homelessness in the Corporate Area.

"The city has to take a prominent role in how we deal with homelessness. This Adult Transitional Facility will ease the burden from the Marie Atkinson Night Shelter," he said, adding that more persons will be reached at the new centre. Minority Leader at the KSAMC, Andrew Swaby, also welcomed the move to build the transitional facility.



DEVELOPMENT TALK: Senator Delroy Williams (left), Honourable Desmond McKenzie and Mr. Omar Sweeney have talks following the groundbreaking exercise.

PORTLAND INFIRMARY TO GET NEW MALE WARD



KINGSTON, Jamaica: In keeping with the Ministry of Local Government and Community Development's mandate to upgrade the living conditions and plants of the country's infirmaries; ground was broken for a new \$45 million male ward at the Portland Infirmery.

"We are using the Portland Infirmery as the pilot project for the model infirmery. We want to give a different look, a different feel to how we treat our residents," disclosed Portfolio Minister, Honourable Desmond McKenzie.

He was speaking at a ground-breaking ceremony for the new living quarters on November 6, 2019. The Portland Infirmery also received funding for the construction of a \$15 million female ward in 2018. The facility, which houses 59 residents at its site in Port Antonio, is on track to serve as a model institution.

All infirmaries will also boast a therapeutic park, the first of which will be done at the St. Elizabeth Infirmery as part of the activities to mark for Local Government and Community month 2019. Industrial washers, dryers and standby generators will also be common features at the government-operated facilities. There are also plans by the Ministry to procure and distribute 500 new mattresses across infirmaries.

Mayor of Port Antonio, Councillor Paul Thompson, noted that the efforts of the Ministry and the Portland Municipal Corporation to enrich the lives of the residents are commendable. "This upgrade will make life more comfortable for the residents and make working conditions better for the staff."

Member of Parliament (MP) for East Portland, Mrs. Ann-Marie Vaz, express delight at the transformation of the Portland Infirmery, and described it as a demonstration of the Government's commitment to help the most vulnerable in the society.

The place is a beautiful sight to behold," added Mr. Daryl Vaz, MP for West Portland, who has been contributing a portion of his parliamentary salary to the infirmery since 2014. To date, his contribution has equalled \$1.4m.



GINGER HOUSE, PORTLAND GETS NEW BRIDGE

KINGSTON, Jamaica: Residents of Ginger House and Cornwall Barracks in East Portland now have easier access to their homes following the construction of a new \$7.1 million swing bridge.

The bridge, which was officially opened by the Honourable Desmond McKenzie, Minister of Local Government and Community Development, will serve some 1500 residents in and around the environs of the Rio Grande Valley.

"Don't swing on it. It is for the purpose of walking, not swinging. It is your investment," said Minister McKenzie at the hand-over on November 6.

"The actual work of the construction started in 2018. Not only was the construction of the bridge completed on time and within budget, but the work also provided opportunities for many people in the community who gained employment during the period of construction."

The Minister also thanked the residents for their patience in awaiting the construction of the new connection, and stated that he was relieved that they would no longer use unconventional methods - including wading through the river - to get home. The original bridge was reportedly washed away during heavy rains in 2014.

Councillor Irvin Brown, whose has responsibility for the Fellowship Division, described the handing over as a "proud day" for the community. He also shared that economic activities, especially for the farmers, would return.

Funding for the new bridge was made available by the Ministry of Local Government and Community Development.

"The bridge falls under the direct control of the Portland Municipal Corporation. It is a part of the government's thrust to use local government to improve lives in the various communities across the country," Minister McKenzie added.

He also spoke to the poor condition of the main thoroughfare leading in to the community of Ginger House.

"I am giving the assurance to the community that we will endeavor to at least make driving a little bit easier than it presently is on the road. Through the Ministry of Local Government, we will do everything that is humanly possible to ensure that you are able to access your living conditions in an easy way."



JUNIOR MAYORS PROGRAMME GETS FUNDING BOOST

MONTEGO BAY, St. James: The Junior Mayors Programme will receive a funding boost from the Ministry of Local Government and Community Development.

"The allocation (to the Junior Mayors Programme) presently stands at \$500,000, and even with \$500,000 some of the projects that the junior mayors have come up with are outstanding," said the Honourable Desmond McKenzie, Minister of Local Government and Community Development. "We intend to increase the allowance for the Junior Mayors Programme to \$750,000, because the legacy of these projects speak for themselves."

He was speaking at the second staging of the Youth Mayors' Forum at the St. James Municipal Corporation offices in Montego Bay on November 20.

The forum saw junior mayors from across the island making a presentation on the 2019 theme for Local Government and Community Month, 'Building Resilient Communities through Local Governance'.

Minister McKenzie described their presentations as being thoroughly-researched. "Those of us who are in public speaking will tell you that despite how articulate you are, there are times when you become emotional and you cannot get across your message. When I listened to the ease and the level of pronouncements from you the junior mayors, I maintain what I have always said: our future is in the hands of capable young men and women," he added. The Minister urged the junior mayors and their peers at the function to continue on the same trajectory.

"Your participation here is sending a clear message that not all of our students want what others want. The majority of you want something that is better". "Jamaica's future is in good hands, the hands of our junior mayors, leaders who I am sure will help to take the island to the next level of prosperity," said Mayor of Montego Bay, Councillor Homer Davis.

The Youth Mayors' Forum was also attended by several Mayors and staff from municipalities across the island, junior councillors, teachers and parents. The Minister also announced that next year's staging of the Youth Mayors' Forum will be held at the Port Antonio Municipal Corporation in Portland.



WELCOME: Prime Minister Andrew Holness (left) and Minister of Local Government and Community Development, Desmond McKenzie with the 2019/2020 cohort of Youth Mayors during a courtesy call at Jamaica House.

TOM'S HOPE ROAD, PORTLAND FOR REHABILITATION

Minister of Local Government and Community Development Desmond McKenzie has announced that plans are in place to repair the main road and bridge at Tom's Hope in the Rio Grande Valley, east Portland.

McKenzie was speaking at the ground-breaking ceremony for a new male ward at the Port Antonio Infirmary last Wednesday when he made the announcement.

"I visited a road and I saw a number of breakaways on that road and the Ministry of Local Government, who has responsibility for over 20,000 kilometres of road network in this country, while our budget is not where we want it to be, we have decided to make an investment on that road.

"We are going to be allocating out of a special source of funding that has come to the ministry through the consolidated fund a sum of \$30 million to undertake repairs on that road at Tom's Hope. It is important that we ensure in whatever way we can to provide these services for the citizens of our country," McKenzie said.

Tom's Hope resident, Clifford Babarang, said he was pleased.

"I grateful for it because when rainfall we cannot pass. We no have no road. When the river come down it take the road as the culvert can't manage the water. We don't have any road to go to our field so we are happy," he said.





TWO WATERSHOPS TO BE BUILT IN PORTLAND



From left: Councillor Derron Woods, Member of Parliament Annmarie Vaz, Minister Desmond McKenzie and mayor Paul Thompson break ground in Commodore, East Portland for a watershop.

than 1,000 residents.

"What this water shop will do is house 20,000 gallons of water that will be provided free of cost to the community. It will be similar to the ones that we have built across the country in St. Elizabeth, Manchester and Clarendon," he said.

He told JIS News that construction is expected to commence shortly and will last about two months. "Before February next year, this will be fully operational," he said.

Commodore resident, Donna Burgess, told JIS News that the water shop will provide community members with reliable access to water.

"We're really grateful for this because in this community we're facing a shortage of water, and I give thanks," Ms. Burgess said.

The ground-breaking ceremony was part of a series of engagements in the parish by the Ministry in partnership with the Portland Municipal Corporation from November 6 to 8, 2019.

"We just opened a swing bridge. We are spending some \$45 million at the [Portland] Infirmery and we are doing a number of roads across this section of Portland. The Councillors have made the necessary representations and we have listened to the people and we are now responding," Minister McKenzie told JIS News.

JIS News:

Portland is the latest parish to benefit under the Government's initiative to construct water shops as a means of addressing the water needs of residents in drought-affected communities across Jamaica.

Two facilities will be built in the parish at a cost of approximately \$19.5 million. Minister of Local Government and Community Development, Hon. Desmond McKenzie, broke ground for the establishment of the first shop in the community of Commodore last November. Speaking to JIS News after the ground breaking, the Minister said that an announcement will be made at a later date as to the location of the other facility.

He noted that the water shop to be built in Commodore will serve more

ST. CATHERINE SENIOR CITIZEN RECEIVES NEW HOME UNDER GOVT'S INDIGENT HOUSING PROGRAMME



From left: Mayor of Spanish Town, Councillor Norman Scott, Minister Desmond McKenzie, home beneficiary Nora Johnson and late Councillor Wesley Suckoo.

JIS NEWS:

Ninety-five-year-old Nora Johnson, a resident of Mendez District in Point Hill, St. Catherine, is the latest recipient of a new home under the Government's Indigent Housing Programme, which is expected to significantly improve her standard of living.

Local Government and Community Development Minister, Hon. Desmond McKenzie, presented her with the keys to the newly constructed dwelling during a ceremony in the community last October.

"I feel happy and I feel proud. I appreciate it and I am glad. I am thankful for it," Ms. Johnson told JIS News.

She said the concrete studio unit, which comprises a bedroom, bathroom and kitchen, now ensures that "no rain wetting me again [and] no water coming in".

It represents a major improvement on the previous structure, which was erected on the same property, that she occupied for many years but which eventually fell into disrepair. In his remarks, Mr. McKenzie noted that the unit is the 14th to be completed under the Indigent Housing Programme over the last two years.

"We have another four under construction and there is one more for the parish. I am expecting that by the end of the calendar year, we will have completed the target that was set. As a matter of fact, we are going to surpass the target that was set for the year, which is 28, based on the number of houses that are presently [being constructed]," he said.

The Minister noted that a new feature of the latest house constructed is the installation of a water tank, which will be replicated for all units to be built across the country.

Under the indigent housing programme, the Government continues to improve the living conditions of many Jamaicans, particularly those in dire need of assistance, by providing them with housing solutions free of cost.

The programme provides modern concrete homes for indigent persons living outside the infirmery system. Mr. McKenzie pointed out that there are 14,000 registered poor across the country, a significant number of whom "fall well below the level that they can find housing solutions for themselves". "Outside of building these units, the Government, through the Ministry, has provided an additional \$20 million to be shared across each municipality for the poor relief officers to carry out repairs to houses that are occupied by registered poor," he informed.

Persons are chosen following a needs-based investigation by the Poor Relief Department in each parish, through which indigent housing is channeled. An investigation is carried out for persons who apply or persons who are already within the system and are in need of housing.

SNAPSHOTS FROM THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY MONTH 2019 NATIONAL CHURCH SERVICE AT THE PORT ANTONIO CHRIST CHURCH IN PORTLAND ON NOVEMBER 3.



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