

# the Cayman Spirit



Cayman Islands Government Information Services

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## Price Gouging Law Carries a Big Stick

By Cornelia Olivier

Persons who contravene the new Price Gouging Control (Emergency Circumstances) Law 2004 could be fined up to \$100,000 on summary conviction by the Courts. The law, which came into effect on 1 November 2004, and is only applicable after a declaration of a state of emergency in the Islands following a tropical storm, a hurricane or some other natural disaster, puts the burden of proof on the person accused of price gouging to show that any price increase is "reasonable and not unconscionable."

It further provides that a five-member commission will be appointed to enquire into these matters. The law provides a basic benchmark for judging a price "unconscionable." Increases will be deemed thus if there is a gross difference between what people paid on average for the item in the thirty days before a tropical storm, hurricane, natural disaster or state of emergency, and the price of those same goods following these circumstances. The law does, however, allow for inevitable price increases, due to the cost of goods; the need of the supplier for adequate working capital and the establishment of reasonable reserves; a reasonable rate of return on investments; public interest or any other reason

the commission finds relevant.

Once the commission begins its work during the relevant period, businesses will be required to provide details of planned major price increases. Before introducing them, businesses will be required to submit written requests to the commission, who will set out the terms and conditions under which the increases may be made.

Members of the public can obtain a copy of the law published in Extraordinary Gazette No. 35, dated 19 November 2004, from the Legislative Assembly, for CI\$4.00, or they can read the law online at [www.gov.ky](http://www.gov.ky). Click on Publications in the top right hand corner and scroll down the Extraordinary Gazettes.

## CIMA Investigates Unfair Practices Claims

Cabinet has asked the Cayman Islands Monetary Authority (CIMA) to investigate claims of unfair insurer practices. CIMA is responsible for regulating the industry and will report to Cabinet via the Financial Secretary.

"Government has maintained an open mind about the allegations," said Attorney General Samuel Bulgin. "Nevertheless, in the absence of consumer protection legislation, we are duty bound to investigate these claims."

As a prelude to the Cabinet decision, the Cayman Islands Recovery Operation (CIRO) had several internal discussions focusing on public concerns. These appeared to be so widespread that CIRO raised the matter at Cabinet level.

Among issues discussed by CIRO were public complaints of the industry's adoption of across-the-board dollar figures per square-

foot in assessing replacement value of homes. The claims are that adjusters of some insurance companies are applying this rate indiscriminately, resulting in a seemingly widespread assessment that homeowners are underinsured.

Other complaints surround the actual damage assessment, while some people allege that there is undue dragging of feet in settling claims.

Of particular concern to Cabinet is the report that some vehicle insurers may be deducting the reduction in duty on replacement cars from the settlement on damaged cars. "If that is so, it is untenable," said Mr. Bulgin, who however reiterated that the government and the public should continue to maintain an open mind until all the facts were in.

## Travel Trailers on the Way

CIRO, the Cayman Islands Recovery Operations task force, has established a group that will procure and locate travel trailers for use as temporary accommodation.

Recovery Manager Orrett Connor announced the plan this week at the Chamber of Commerce 1 December luncheon at which he was the guest speaker.

Mr. Connor said that the programme is intended as a bridging mechanism to assist tenants to get back into their homes or into rented accommodation.

The Travel Trailers are 32 ft long and 8 ft wide and sleep six people. They are fully furnished, including appliances such as refrigerators and stoves. Amenities include water heaters and air-conditioning. They can be placed on tenants' own property, or on a government-designated site.

*Continued on Page 2*

# Editorial

Now moving into its third month of operation, CIRO (the Cayman Islands Recovery Operation) has achieved some important benchmarks, as outlined this week by Manager Orrett Connor in his address to the Chamber of Commerce.

Among them: all Government schools have resumed classes disrupted by Ivan; tourists, Cayman's bread and butter, are back; all buildings able to receive electricity are connected; some government funding is available to assist persons with uninsured damaged housing; a comprehensive debris removal programme is underway—and accelerating; and, district assistance centres are open to ensure the public's access to information.

Next, Government is setting its mind to a massive school-rebuilding programme that will top \$18 million. It is addressing temporary housing with the proposed importation of trailers. Teams of building crews are to be organized in the districts to assist the uninsured with rebuilding and repair of their homes.

Contrast all this to the horror we faced when we attempted those first tentative steps from our houses on the Monday after Ivan – water, water everywhere and not a drop to drink! Like childbirth, it is perhaps easy to forget the pain (though decidedly *not* the experience!), but we must never forget the lessons.

As Manager Connor told the Chamber, the greatest thing that has likely come out of Ivan are the lessons, and these we could not quite have gained other than by experience.

More resources into future disaster mitigation are currently promised. We now know how critical they are and what an investment it is, when we consider the losses to the country caused by this terrible hurricane.

*Continued from Page 1*

Cabinet has approved the purchase of 50 to 75 trailers, which will be introduced in phases according to demand. The first ten trailers will be available early in the new year.

The Temporary Housing Committee (THC) has determined the eligibility criteria for prospective tenants. Mrs. Joy Basdeo, who heads the committee, says that the travel trailers will be allocated to individual and families whose housing is uninhabitable or totally destroyed.

## MRCU Resumes Night Flights

by Angelique Crowther

The Mosquito Research and Control Unit (MRCU) recently resumed night aerial spraying operations, albeit with a degree of caution.

Since Hurricane Ivan, MRCU had suspended night flights because of the number of unlit and damaged communication towers, cranes, and antennae, as well as the lack of street lights that made flying at night hazardous.

They did, however, undertake nighttime fogging from trucks, and so far that initiative, combined with daytime aerial efforts, has paid off. Much of the success is due to intensified larviciding operations, using the equivalent of a year's supply of larvicide. "We saved the island from a massive mosquito problem," says MRCU Chief Dr. Bill Petrie. "In our view, daylight aerial operations dispersing larvicide pellets over problem areas, and night-time fogging from trucks have controlled mosquitoes effectively."

And now the resumption of nighttime flying (itself a significant part of the recovery process for MRCU) is contributing to a greater level of comfort in the department – and for the population as well.

Among the data department chiefs considered in their decision to resume night flights

were maps using GPS technology. Created by Assistant Director of Research and Development Dr Alan Wheeler, the maps detail the location of all tall towers and antennae across Grand Cayman. The investigation revealed that nearly all towers are now lit, and, along with improved street lighting, this has added up to an overall positive environment for night flying.

The group, which included Chief Pilot Richard Clough, opted for a cautious approach. Once data gathered from mosquito traps indicated a problem, the pilot would conduct two daytime safety flights. The first reconnaissance flight would check for new obstacles in the area to be sprayed and the second flight, just prior to sunset, would cover the same area, checking that obstacles such as cranes and towers were lit for the evening.

Mosquitoes are most active from dusk to one hour after sunset, making this the optimal time for low-altitude flights, since the larvicide sprayed from the plane hits the mosquitoes when they are flying.

During November, MRCU conducted two trial aerial spraying flights at sunset to test the effectiveness of spraying from higher altitudes.

## *Aedes aegypti* Under Control

By Angelique Crowther

A campaign by the Mosquito Research and Control Unit (MRCU) to control the annoying and potentially risky mosquito *Aedes aegypti* has been effective.

Currently the count for *Aedes aegypti* is low, under 20, and success is credited to a combination of control efforts and cool and dry weather conditions unfavourable for breeding. With the resumption of nighttime flying, the prognosis looks even better.

MRCU had registered concern when data gathered through mosquito sampling in the affected areas of George Town and West Bay had indicated a count of 120 *Aedes aegypti* between 18 and 22 October.

Assistant Director of Research and Development Dr. Alan Wheeler launched an intense campaign to counter the problem. His plan involved deploying ground teams of up to 16 men to investigate yards during the day,

destroying breeding areas and dispersing larvicide. During the evening, teams were sent out on fogging trucks to spray larvicide in problem areas and owing to these efforts, numbers were reduced the following week to a count of only 40 (now down to 20).

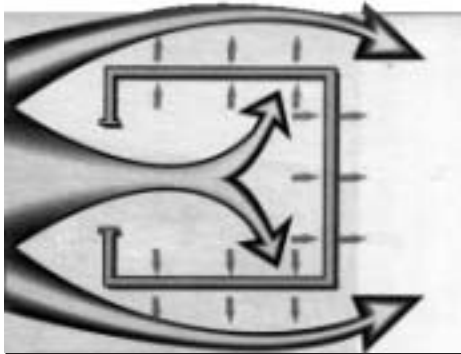
*Aedes aegypti* is most active around sunset and its bites are an irritation to many people. Piles of debris and garbage post-Ivan increased breeding places for the mosquito, which thrives in any water-holding container. Since the mosquito is a possible carrier for dengue fever, there was concern that a potential health hazard could arise. To date, no cases have been found on the island, meaning that no local transmissions can take place.

Members of the public are asked to continue to be sensitive to the potential for mosquito breeding around homes and offices and to assist by disposing of water in containers and potential breeding receptacles that may be in their vicinity.



# As you Rebuild... Hurricane Proof your Home or Business

**W**hen rebuilding your home after Ivan, take time to safeguard it against the fury of the next hurricane. Check your roof, windows, doors, shutters and garage doors for



*Wind entering your home will demolish the interior and its contents and can cause the roof to blow off.*



vulnerability to strong winds as these four areas can make the difference between a home that fails and one that survives the storm.

Examining the damage Hurricane Andrew caused in Florida in 1992, experts found that hurricanes tend to destroy houses in two ways – constant gnawing or sudden collapse. Constant gnawing begins with the hurricane getting a finger into the house – usually at the roof. The roofing material peels away at the gable ends or eaves, exposing the edges of the roof sheathing. Then, when the wind then picks off a piece of the sheathing, the ceiling gets soaked, letting the wind inside your home. While the structure might survive, the interior and its contents will be demolished.

## FOR THE ROOF

Invest in hurricane straps or clips connecting the roof to the walls to reduce the vulnerability of your roof to strong winds. These straps or clips should be placed where the roof truss adjoins the exterior wall and should be strong enough to resist the uplift effect of the wind. Consult the Building Control Unit (BCU) in the Planning Department for specifications.

If you have a gable-end roof, make sure it is properly braced at the ends. Attach 2x4



*Hurricane straps will reduce the vulnerability of your roof to strong winds.*

or 2x6s to the gable end, perpendicular to the truss system. Use screws, not nails, to attach the braces, say building experts who studied the damage of several hurricanes in Florida. They also recommend installing steel angles to the gable end bracing to reinforce the gable ends.

While you can make some of these changes yourself, others require the expertise of an experienced contractor, especially installing the hurricane straps since it requires access to the inside of the roof underneath the sheathing.

Experts also recommend choosing metal



*Standing-seam metal roofs do well when properly installed.*

roofing or asphalt shingles instead of roof tiles. Standing-seam metal roofs do well if they are crimped together, using the manufacturer's recommended machines. Inadequate installation can cause the roof to peel away. Asphalt shingles will also withstand a storm well if they are attached correctly. Roof tiles however can cause a lot of damage when they go airborne and need very specific installation methods.

## FOR THE EXTERIOR DOORS & WINDOWS

Next take a look at all exterior doors and windows as these are the protective shell of your home and sudden collapse will occur if this shell is breached. It is safer to ensure that exterior doors open *outwards*, making it harder for them to blow in. If a door facing the wind blows in, the full force of the storm will hit the interior. Needing somewhere to go, the wind will then rip out windows, doors, walls or the roof. Even a small breach such as a roof tile bursting through a window, can have the same effect.

For added protection choose an impact-resistant glazing such as laminated glass when replacing windows, French, or sliding doors. Also, check all double entry doors. Secure the inactive door to the header and thresholds by adding reinforcing pins to the top and bot-

tom of the door as well as by adding heavier hinges and more secure locks.

Make sure door and window frames are securely fastened to their rough framing and check that the header is held in the wall with steel strapping and not just a couple of nails.

## FOR THE SHUTTERS

The most effective way to protect your home against this is to shutter all windows, French, and sliding doors. The best option when installing shutters is to bolt them to the walls as strong winds tend to rip off plywood, roll-



*Shuttering is the most effective way to keep flying debris out.*

down, and louvered aluminium shutters.

However, homemade plywood shutters, if installed properly, can offer a high level of protection. For this you will need bolts, wood or masonry anchors and large washers. Pre-cut the plywood to overlap windows by at least four inches and number them so you will know where to fit them in case of a storm. Drill four holes in the centre area of the plywood to relieve pressure during the hurricane.



*Choose shutters that can be bolted to the exterior wall.*

## FOR THE GARAGE

Double garage doors are another weak point because they tend to wobble as high winds blow. These doors can pull out of their tracks or collapse from the wind pressure. Install bracing horizontally across the door. This can be done anytime as the bracing can remain on the doors year round. Use six to eight 2x4s or steel supports for this.

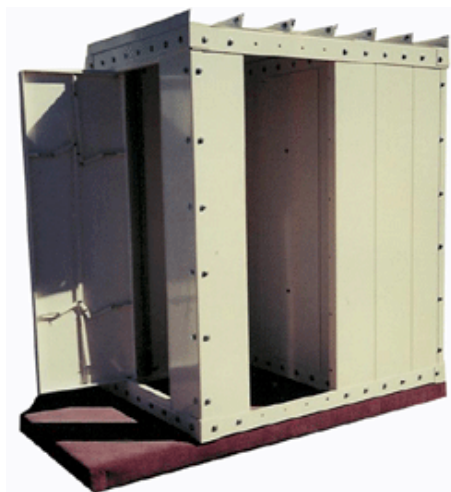
When installing a new garage door, buy a specially reinforced one and have it installed by a professional.



*Double garage doors need reinforcing.*

## FOR THE SAFE ROOM

Everyone should consider adding a safe room to their homes. Hiding in the bathroom provide little more than emotional cover, says building expert, as high winds can blow debris through the walls. Some counties in



*A saferoom may become a requirement in future.*

Florida are considering adopting a code that will require new homes to have one room that is projectile proof. These will likely be eight square feet with stud walls covered with four inches of plywood.

The Cayman Islands Planning Department is also considering proposing a similar *safe room* requirement that could be either a bathroom, walk-in-closet or other interior room. This room would have a concrete roof and reinforced concrete walls, says Director of Planning Kenneth Ebanks.

In choosing interior walls for your home in general, consider the fact that building inspectors found that framed walls with steel studs were typically destroyed when a window blew out, allowing the wind access to the rest of the house. Partition wall made of wood studs did far better, sometimes localizing wind and water damage to a single room.

When repairing your fence, leave spaces at the bottom instead of driving every panel into the ground. The spaces will allow winds to blow under the fence, rather than knocking it down. To protect your new porch, make sure the roof is bolted to the exterior wall of the house and attach the porch flooring to the house.

For all buildings damaged during Hurricane Ivan the Planning Department is offering **FREE** inspections for the electrical, plumbing and structural components. To have your building inspected please call 769-PLAN (7526) or fax. 769-2922.

# Housing Grant Deadline Extended

The Cayman Islands Government Housing Recovery Grant (HRG) programme has extended its deadline for applications for its "no-strings-attached" grant to eligible persons who need help in repairing their homes. This extension, to remain in effect until further notice, recognises the difficulties and delays applicants are experiencing in getting estimates for repairs and sourcing repair materials.

"Since early November, we started receiving applications and so far we have in hand approximately 516 applications, with over 150 submitted over the past two days, right before the initial 30 November deadline," comments Cayman Islands Development Bank (CIDB) Director Mrs. Angela Miller.

The CIDB has approved 71 applications, and repairs for many are well underway, the Director said.

"We hope to have the site inspections carried out as quickly as possible for those applications submitted just before the deadline. Once an application is complete and the site inspection carried out, the approval process will begin," Mrs. Miller said. "We expect that the HRG will continue to assist many families in need over the next couple of weeks and our aim is to have as many homes repaired as possible before Christmas."

The first funds were distributed on 18 November, a 12-working-day turnaround rate since the programme's 1 November launch that should encourage those whose applications are in process. For recipients, this funding represents a means of moving forward with rebuilding their homes and getting their lives back on a more even keel.

According to grant recipient Jewel Rose Levy: "The HRG personnel were very efficient and I did not have to wait very long. I received my funds in two weeks and feel they are doing a tremendous job."

Commending the efforts of government to help identify and assist in the recovery endeavour, Mrs. Miller said: "We want to recognise the effort of the Leader of Government Business, the Honourable McKeeva Bush, who initiated the HRG. We also want to recognise the efforts of Ms Clyde Linwood the project coordinator, and the entire HRG committee for their long hours and commitment to the process of assisting Caymanians who are in dire need of repairs and/or restoration of their homes."

The CIDB is administering a \$5.5 million pool of funds made available by the Cayman Islands Government to alleviate the housing situation for persons whose homes were damaged by Hurricane Ivan and had no insurance coverage. The grants do not require repayment to the CIDB.

Commenting on their due diligence in ensuring that Government's funds are protected from abuse, while at the same time securing applicants' value for money, Director Miller said that the CIDB had adopted a standard rate for contractors' work.

"In the early days of the fund's operation, the disparity in contractors' estimates was a concern," Mrs. Miller said. "We found that the best way to bring some consistency to the table was to adopt a standard rate sheet as a base for negotiating the best deal for applicants – and it is working well."

For more information, contact the CIDB at 949-7511 or visit them at Dr. Roy's Drive in George Town.

For Those Interested in Applying...

**Deadline:** 30 December 2004

**Priority:** Applicants with a total household income below CI\$40,000, the uninsured, elderly and indigent

Maximum funds granted: CI\$15,000

## Criteria

- Damage must be a result of Hurricane Ivan
- Funds to be used strictly for permanent structure repairs and primary dwelling restoration
- Funds to be used for property damage not covered by insurance
- Must be owner occupied, single dwelling unit
- Must be Caymanian or hold Caymanian status

An application is considered complete **only** when an estimate for repair or restoration is provided along with:

- Copy of passport, birth certificate, or other evidence of Caymanian Status
- Land registry information if available

## Turnaround Time

There is a five-day response time for *completed applications*. Those applications received without the estimate cannot be processed until the necessary information is provided.

# Debris Removal:

## Accelerate the Process

MC Restoration has started roadside debris collection. Since properly sorted debris speeds processing and minimizes environmental impact, the categories for sorting have been further refined. Four district disposal sites are open to residents and a drop-off centre is now open to handle the disposal of hazardous materials.

### Sorting Debris for Pick-up

Do your bit to help the clean up process by placing the following into separate piles for pick-up:

- **Vegetative debris:** brush, leaves, tree branches, clippings, logs, stumps.
- **Construction & demolition debris:** brick, concrete, pipe, sheetrock, treated lumber, furniture, tile.
- **Roofing material:** shingles, roofing felt, tar paper, NO sheet metal.
- **Metals:** metal sheeting, aluminum, tin, all metals.
- **White goods:** refrigerators, washers, dryers, stoves, hot water heaters, dishwashers, a/c units.

### District Disposal Sites

The following temporary disposal sites are open to the public:

**East End:** East End Quarry

**Pease Bay:** Justin Woods' Quarry on Lakeview Drive

**Newlands:** Hirst Road, follow the signs

**West Bay:** North West Point Road

### Hazardous Materials

A drop-off centre is now open on Sparkys Drive just north of CUC. Look for the signs. This is the place to dispose of tires, batteries, paint cans, fuel containers, pressurized gas containers, household cleaning products, drain cleaners, petroleum-based liquids, solvents, pool chemicals, and other chemicals.

To contact MC Restoration, call 939-1942

## Red-tagged Cars: Off Limits

Members of the public are reminded that red-tagged cars remain private property, say Cayman Island Recovery Operation (CIRO) officials.

“Even though cars have been tagged, sending a warning to owners that they are in line for disposal within 14 days, this does not give license to anyone else to claim them – for whatever reason,” says CIRO Manager Orrett Connor.

MC Restoration, Government’s debris removal company, is making arrangements for disposal of cars.

Persons wishing to discuss aspects of this arrangement may contact MC Restoration at 939-1942.

## Modular Classrooms Temporary Solution

By Lynsay Brown

As plans to rebuild schools get underway, a number of modular classrooms have been ordered as a short-term solution, and are scheduled to arrive by January. Two have already arrived and will be allocated as a priority to George Town and East End Primary Schools.

This is part of Phase 2 of the Ministry of Education’s recovery process that involves an intensive \$18 million rebuilding programme.

George Town Primary School’s assembly hall opened on Tuesday, 30 November, and two Year 6 classes are now operating there. All remaining students are still based at the Elmslie Learning Centre. In total, there are plans to install three modular classrooms on the school site and, following repair work, it is anticipated that ten additional classrooms will be available from the beginning of January.

There are currently over 80 students at the East End Primary School learning centre but due to damage, classroom space continues to be an issue. Repairs to the school have been scheduled and will commence soon, including re-roofing, repairs to the media room and four of the classrooms.

Limited space at Savannah School has resulted in doubling up of classes. However, the school is now operational in the rear class-



## Pre-school and Day Care Centre Update

The following 17 pre-schools and day care centres are now open:

- **Corisues** in Lower Valley - contact 947 2270
- **First Steps** on Smith Road, George Town - contact 525 8413 or 916 1121
- **Jack and Jill Nursery/Day Care** – George Town – contact 949 5794
- **Just For Kids** on Orange Drive, Prospect - contact 916 5754
- **Little Angels** on Walkers Road, George Town - contact 917 7920/ 916 3057
- **Little Trotters** on Walkers Road, George Town - contact 525 4080
- **Miss Nadine’s Pre-School (NCVO)** – George Town – contact 945 1078
- **Montessori By The Sea** at Prospect Point - contact 947 0684
- **Montessori del Sol** on Walkers Road, GT- contact 525 7000/ 949 3222
- **Quality Child Care** in West Bay - contact 926 2527/ 917 9014
- **Shauna’s Early World** in West Bay - contact 916 6367
- **Sister Janice Early Learning Center** on Crewe Road - contact 929 0102
- **St George’s Anglican Pre-School** off Eastern Avenue, GT- contact 945 0441
- **Tiffany’s Pre-School** in West Bay - contact 916 1101
- **The Achievement Centre** on Shamrock Road - contact 326 3595/ 326 1208.
- **WEE Care Pre-School** at First Baptist Christian School on Crewe Road – 926 3227/949 0691.
- **Willies Nursery** on Northward Road – contact 927 7266/947 3332

Please contact the pre-schools or day care centres directly to enquire about availability of places and cost.

room blocks and four modular classrooms have been allocated as a priority, with two arriving by January.

One modular classroom has been allocated to Bodden Town School, which is operational but repairs are needed to Year 1 & 2 classrooms and the rear classroom block.

John Gray High School (JGHS) will receive 10 modular classrooms as 90% of its buildings were damaged. Years 11 & 12 students have returned to the school site but due to limited space, Year 10 students have been relocated to the Agape Church. With the installation of modular classrooms it is anticipated that those students will be able to return to the school site by 1 February.

As a priority, one modular classroom will be allocated to George Hicks High School (GHHS). The school received extensive damage throughout the site, but currently has 16 operational rooms, accommodating one year group per day. Phase 2 of remediation work

has begun and it is anticipated that 29 classrooms will be open by the beginning of January, allowing half the school to be present at one time.

## Shelter Update

By Lynsay Brown

There are currently (as at 2 December) 29 homeless residents remaining in the East End shelter. As soon as electricity and basic furniture have been installed, a few of these families will be relocated to the Lyndhurst Apartments.

The Department of Children and Family Services is also planning to acquire two affordable housing properties for some of the elderly East End shelter residents who were temporarily relocated to Sammy’s Inn with The Pines residents.

# Brac Hospitality Hits the Sweet Spot

By Cornelia Olivier

Emerging from shelters and battered homes after Hurricane Ivan, it was good to know that there was a place to go where water was still running, utility poles standing and cars being driven. Having escaped the brunt of the storm, the Sister Islands proved to be a welcome haven for many stressed Grand Cayman residents in the weeks following Hurricane Ivan.

According to the Secretary of the Sister Islands Emergency Committee Mrs Wanda Tatum JP, Cayman Airways flew in almost 1,400 people in the first week after the storm. "We had many Grand Cayman residents bringing their children here to stay with family or friends while they returned to the challenge of rebuilding," she said.

And the District Administration and Sister Islands' Essential Relief Committee made sure arriving people received a good measure of Brac hospitality. There were friendly and caring faces to greet them, a nurse to offer medical assistance and tables laden with food and drinks.

District Administrator Kenny Ryan said everyone knew that those arriving on the Brac in the days following the storm were still in the mode where food and drink was not readily available. "Members of the community contributed to the welcoming effort with many volunteers waiting to greet those arriving. We also had people calling in offering rooms and homes to people without a place to stay."

Local hotels offered their rooms at cost price to people looking for a clean, quiet place, the luxury of air-conditioning and a cold beer.

As Ms Trudy Viers, resort manager at Brac Reef Beach Resort, recalled: "People walked through our doors visibly tired, juggling their suitcases and bags of laundry. All they wanted was a place to rest. Families brought their children to attend school and some stayed for more than a month. Many of our weekend visitors returned two or three times and several local businesses sent their employees for a few days of de-stressing."

The hurricane gave local tourism an unexpected boost, Ms Viers said: "These days overseas visitors account for 60 to 70 % of

our guests and the rest of the rooms we fill with people from Grand Cayman still looking for a quick getaway. We are 100% occupied every weekend."

Confirming the healthy outlook of tourism on the Brac, Mr. Ryan said: "Bookings

for the coming season are looking good and we are grateful." He thanked the Brac community, the members of the island's Essential Relief Committee, fireman and police for their contributions after the storm.

## Thumbs Up for the BT Clinic

By Ruth Smith

During this week's tour of the relocated Bodden Town Clinic, Health Services Minister, the Hon. Gilbert McLean expressed pride in its continued service—despite the challenges.

"In partnering with the Seventh-day Adventist Church, we have been able to continue providing invaluable health services in Bodden Town," commented Mr. McLean. "The nurses, doctors and other staff have settled into this new environment and have ensured that patients receive the utmost consideration as they continue to provide the quality health care typical of our district clinics."

Although there has been an island-wide decline in the numbers of persons attending clinics and health centres, staff at the Bodden Town Clinic are keeping busy: "People are coming in for a variety of reasons," says Senior Public Health Nurse Annie Kay Price. "We offer the same services that we did at the

Nurse Jessie Ritch Memorial Health Centre and encourage people to come in and use them. We are dedicated to ensuring that proper health care is available for everyone in the community and want the people to know we are still here for them."

Nursing services are available from 9:00am to 4:00pm, Monday through Friday and doctors visit on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, from 9:00am to 12:00 noon.

Referring to the church's generosity, Mr. McLean said: "I extend government's appreciation to the pastors and congregation of the Bodden Town Seventh-day Adventist Church, for making it possible to continue to offer health services to this community. With their ongoing support and commitment to good health, we can continue our efforts at keeping Cayman strong and healthy during the recovery process."

Reconstruction of the Nurse Jessie Ritch Memorial Health Centre will be completed by the end of February 2005.



Minister of Health Services the Honourable Gilbert McLean (L) examines medical supplies shown by Dr. David Finnigan (R), at the Bodden Town Clinic. Also shown is Pastor Jeffrey Thompson, President of the Cayman Islands Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

# More Resources For Future Disaster Mitigation

By Lennon Christian

While government agencies responsible for disaster planning have prepared and executed their plans with proficiency over the years, additional resources will now be allocated to reducing the impact of future disasters.

Mr. Orrett Connor, Cabinet Secretary and Project Manager for the Cayman Islands Recovery Operation (CIRO), shared these and other ongoing plans with members and guests at the 24-November monthly Chamber of Commerce (CC) luncheon.

Mr. Connor prefaced his presentation to the CC audience by reaffirming that government valued its partnership with the commercial sector and, with recent events, would be placing an even greater importance to it. He spoke of the cooperative work involving government departments and community-wide groups, from pastors to individual volunteers.

Referring to the decision to engage James Lee Witt & Associates as crisis management and mitigation consultants, Mr. Connor said that CIRO serves four main functions: It allows departments and the private sector to coordinate actions and share information; it provides a single source of comprehensive information; it provides a process for action tracking and clarification of responsibilities; and it is documenting the recovery processes for use in developing future response and recovery plans.

Mr. Connor also outlined CIRO's four main functional groupings - Operations, Information and Planning, Logistics, and Community Outreach and Media Affairs. These groups, he explained, are supported by a resource committee comprising permanent secretaries; a finance team headed by Financial Secretary the Hon. Ken Jefferson; and a private sector liaison group.

Summarising CIRO's activities and achievements to date, Mr. Connor noted that in the area of housing, CIRO:

- has assisted in managing the shelter and care of persons still needing help;
- has organized a preliminary survey of housing needs and developed a plan for temporary and longer-term housing, including the acquisition of trailer homes to arrive shortly and to be rented at moderate rates;
- is working with financial institutions to put in place low- and no-interest loans. Programmes are already in place with the CI Civil Service Association, Co-operative Credit Union and the Cayman Islands Development Bank (CIDB), and funds are being disbursed;
- is currently developing application and disbursement procedures for housing grants and loans; it is soliciting contractors to work on repairs for homeowners receiving repair grants, and organizing work crews to assist the rebuilding and restoration of homes in

each district;

- is pursuing alternative sourcing of building supplies, including non-US jurisdictions, to bring materials into Cayman faster and more competitively for the Government Housing Grant Scheme being administered by the CIDB;
- is working to bring greater coordination among builders, adjusters and insurance companies, and is addressing processes for speeding up insurance payments to homeowners, businesses and others, and is informing the public of insurance procedures and policies regarding record-keeping, reimbursements, etc.

Other activities under CIRO's auspices outlined by Mr Connor include:

- the establishment of Disaster Assistance Centres (DACs) in each district;
- the provision of free counselling support;
- ensuring the public is kept abreast of the recovery process through weekly CIRO press briefings, the facilitation of regular radio discussions and appearances on talk shows, the production and distribution of the weekly newsletter *CaymanSpirit*, and the production of fact sheets providing necessary information for distribution through the DACs and other outlets.



Mr. Orrett Connor as he addresses Chamber members at this week's luncheon

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*Do you have essential public information or an inspirational recovery story to tell? Give us a call or send an email.*