

INDUSTRY NEWS

PAJ ACQUIRING FLOATING CRUISE PIER FOR PORT ROYAL

The Port Authority of Jamaica is making plans to make Port Royal a premier sightseeing destination for tourists through investment in a floating platform for cruise ships. This will be an alternative to dredging the harbour to accommodate the docking of vessels. Port Authority President and CEO Professor Gordon Shirley said the agency is acquiring a unique floating pier technology, SeaWalk, which it expects to implement in Port Royal by the first quarter of 2019. It will open a new cruise gateway to the ancient city and Kingston itself, creating a new tourist attraction in eastern Jamaica. "The SeaWalk was selected because its unique design allows it to be installed without the need for dredging or driving of piles," said Shirley. It means that the mangroves and archaeological assets in the sunken city - deposited underwater after massive earthquakes - would be protected, he said.

(Jamaica Gleaner)

TOURISM INTERESTS URGED TO INVEST IN AGRICULTURE

Chairman of the Tourism Linkages Council, Adam Stewart, is calling on hoteliers and other tourism interests, to invest in the local agriculture sector, noting that this is a sure-fire way of enhancing the country's economic development. He notes that "for too long, we have been ignoring the obvious linkage between two of Jamaica's most important sectors - agriculture and tourism - and the benefits to be had in getting them to work in sync with each other. "I am today calling on and encouraging all of corporate Jamaica, all of the other hotel brands, locally and foreign-owned, to pay attention to the farmers. Pay attention to the farmers who have a role to play in the growth that the industry is experiencing today. Their (the farmers) success is Jamaica's success, which is the industry's success," said Stewart, who is also Chief Executive Officer of Sandals Resorts International. Sandals has made an upfront purchase of more than \$3 million worth of Irish potato seeds for local farmers, which equates to 1,300 bags, capable of planting 40 to 50 acres. The provision is expected to yield 700,000 pounds of potatoes to supply the Sandals chain. While five farmers will benefit in this initial phase, the objective is to expand the programme, so that farmers will be the sole providers of Irish potatoes to the entire Sandals group, which comprise 11 resorts in Jamaica.

(Jamaica Gleaner)

TOURISM CONGRESS TO ADDRESS BUILDING RESILIENCE IN THE SECTOR

When the XXIV Inter-American Congress of Ministers and High-Level Authorities of Tourism opens on March 21 at the Guyana Marriott Hotel, one of the key areas for presentation and discussion will be the matter of building resilience in the tourism sector in the Americas. Secretary General and CEO of the Caribbean Tourism Organisation (CTO), Hugh Riley will give a CTO perspective on the theme, while Jamaica's Minister of Tourism, Hon. Edmund Bartlett will look at global efforts to promote resilience. Kim Osborne, the Executive Secretary for Integral Development at the Organisation of American States and Sandra Howard, Vice-Minister of Tourism of Colombia, will also address the congress.

(OAS Congress)

THE WEEK AHEAD

• CARNIVAL IN JAMAICA EVENT SERIES

January 16 - April 2

Carnival in Jamaica is in full swing and ends in April. Some of the highlights of the season include: Beach Jouvert, Reveller's Fete and Bacchanal Jouvert & Road March. This year sees the return of mas bands including Bacchanal Jamaica, Jamaica Carnival, Xaymaca International, Xodus and the Ocho Rios Carnival. The event is indeed a unique expression of our island spirit and showcases to the world a carnival unique to Jamaica.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT:

www.visitjamaica.com/carnivalinjamaica

• KINGSTON CITY RUN

March 16-18

The 6th staging of this charity race is this weekend. The 1/2 marathon, 10k and 5k event features some of Kingston's iconic sites along the route, including: Devon House, Hope Gardens, Bob Marley Museum, Vale Royal and Kings House. Proceeds will benefit five charities that help the country's homeless.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT:

www.kingstoncityrun.com

• CARIFTA SWIMMING CHAMPIONSHIPS

March 15 - 18 & March 31 - April 4

This annual Caribbean regional swimming, water polo, synchronized and open water swimming championship has thousands of participants from Jamaica and the Caribbean attending these competitive games. Some 25 Caribbean islands will be fully engaged over 9 days of competition.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT: www.asaj.com.jm

• ISSA BOYS AND GIRLS CHAMPS

March 20 -24

The Inter-Secondary School Sports Association (ISSA) Boys and Girls Athletics Championships will take place at the National Stadium in Kingston. The annual showcase of track and field excellence at the high school level offers a glimpse of Jamaica's future international athletic stars.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL: (876) 969-5776

• BLUE MOUNTAIN COFFEE FESTIVAL

March 23 - 25

The inaugural Jamaica Blue Mountain Coffee festival takes place on historic grounds in Newcastle. Experience three days of Jamaican food, coffee and culture along the Blue Mountain Culinary Trail, featuring indigenous arts and crafts, live reggae music performances and tours.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT: www.jamaicacoffeefest.com

COMING UP

• VENUS INVITATIONAL TOURNAMENT

March 23-25

Hosted by the Venus Volleyball Club, this annual event is a fixture on the volleyball calendar. Teams from Jamaica, the Caribbean, USA and Canada are scheduled to participate.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL: (876) 383-3935

• EARTH HOUR CONCERT

March 24

The annual Earth Hour Concert will take place at the Ranny Williams Entertainment Centre in Kingston from 5:00 p.m. - 11:00p.m. The Earth Hour in Kingston is part of a global movement to increase awareness about climate change. There is no entry charge, but patrons can secure complimentary tickets in advance from the Gleaner, JCDC and Grab and Go locations in Kingston. Patrons will be required to pay J\$ 500 at the gate.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT:

www.facebook.com/EarthHourJA