



Ministry of Economic Development

Ministerial Statement
To the House of Assembly

By

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Minister of Economic Development

America's Cup Update
Friday, 17th February 2017

Mr Speaker, I would like to update the House on the progress of preparations for the America's Cup. It's hard to believe that we are less than 100 days away from the event which commences on 26 May 2017 and continues through to the end of June.

Since my last update, excellent progress has been made on the transformation of the Royal Naval Dockyard South Basin and surrounding areas to host the event. Freeport Drive has become the AC Pit Row – Oracle Team USA and Softbank Team Japan have been joined by the British team Land Rover BAR and Groupama Team France.

Within the next few two months, Team New Zealand, Artemis and Red Bull Youth America's Cup will establish bases on the newly created Cross Island. In addition to the AC teams, Cross Island will soon be built-out with the infrastructure for all facets of the America's Cup Event Village. The ground work for a newly created AC transportation hub is underway to the east of Cut Bridge, and several of the West End Development Corporation (WEDCO) buildings currently under construction will be used for the event. These include Oracle base, Building 9, Sail Loft, Prince Alfred Terrace, the Bungalow Cottage, and potentially the former HMS Malabar. The facilities will be leased for America's Cup related offices and to house the many operational groups required for organising and staging the Event, including the Event's joint command centre, volunteers, the medical team, and other key stakeholders.

It should be noted that the Chicane Building and the Sail Loft in Dockyard add to the list of buildings that were closed, or in a deplorable state, and are now being restored, improved or upgraded and will be used for the America's Cup. These upgrades and renovations offer huge benefits to WEDCO and they give great support infrastructure for the Event. The legacy benefit to these historical buildings is phenomenal – the Sail Loft alone will be a stunning, long-term asset for WEDCO.

Over the next few weeks, the Hamilton waterfront will undergo minor works to prepare the number one dock area for super yacht berthing during the America's Cup.

Mr Speaker, our community continues to benefit from ongoing America's Cup-related infrastructure projects as well as the relocation to Bermuda of almost 300 America's Cup Event Authority (ACEA) and America's Cup teams' members along with over 300 of their family members. All of these teams have included up to 10 Bermudians on their staff.

To date over 40 construction companies and professional services agencies have been involved in the ACBDA-funded America's Cup projects in Dockyard alone. Collectively, the teams have reported that they have spent over \$22 million on their team base operations in 2016. This amount does not include team salaries and spending by individual team members on local good and services. The teams and their families have integrated nicely into our community. Some notable examples include, SoftBank Team Japan participating in the Argus Group's Community Day with children and teachers at Sandys Secondary Middle School and Oracle refurbishing 15 Optimist dinghies and donating them to the Sandys Boat Club – as well as sprucing up East End Primary School buildings. Many America's Cup team members have also participated in presentations at our schools.

Mr Speaker, the America's Cup Endeavour Program continues to expose our local middle-school-aged students to sailing and learning opportunities through their STEAM curriculum (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics). To date approximately 1300 students have participated in the program. This includes a weekday curricular program and an afterschool program. Also, over 3000 participants have taken part in the program's community outreach plan, which includes various events such as Harbour nights and the St George's Marine Expo.

During January, two students who participated in the 2015/2016 Endeavour Program experienced a wonderful opportunity. At no personal cost, Ahzai Smith and Christopher Raymond, flew to New Zealand with AC Endeavour Program Coordinator Leah Collis to compete in three regattas and they placed well in their respective divisions. In fact, during the Inaugural O'Pen Bic National championships, they both scored at the top of their divisions. The students were selected based on their performance and attendance at the

Bermuda Sailing Nationals and were nominated by instructors from the East and West forts. Ahzai from Warwick Academy was the top performer at the Championship Fleet and Christopher from Mount Saint Agnes was the top AC Endeavour performer at the Green Fleet during Nationals. Both students worked with a private tutor to keep up to date with their school work while travelling.

During the first week in February, Land Rover BAR opened their new team base and launched an Exploration Zone for local school children and the public.

Mr Speaker, in November 2016 America's Cup Concessions Orders were made for Groupama Team France, Land Rover BAR, and Emirates Team New Zealand. The orders included the same employment-related concessions that were granted to the Artemis Racing, SoftBank Team Japan and Oracle racing teams as outlined under section 8 of the America's Cup Act 2015. Land Rover BAR also received vehicle-related concessions for the importation of up to six Land Rover vehicles for personal use by company officials and up to six Land Rover passenger vehicles to transport the team's guests. All of the vehicles must leave the island at the end of the event and the six passenger vehicles must be driven by persons with Public Service Vehicle Driver's licenses.

Mr Speaker, in order to promote local awareness and general on-island exposure for the event, the ACBDA has initiated island-wide branding. Anyone travelling through the L.F. Wade International Airport would have seen the presence of America's Cup branding from the time they got off the airplane until they left the Custom's area. AC branding is already present on the back windows of Bermuda's public buses and along some areas of the main road to Dockyard. Over the next few weeks branding will be more prominently displayed on selected bus shelters, bridges and light poles. The ACBDA's marketing team is actively engaged in public relations initiatives to inform Bermuda about all aspects of the America's Cup and how they can get involved.

Additionally, most of the ACBDA's 16 working committees, including more than 200 members and staffed predominantly by volunteers, have been working diligently for the past two years to develop structured processes, action plans and coordinated budgets to ensure that all elements and functional areas are efficiently delivered for the event. Some of these plans include On-Water Services, Transportation, Telecoms, Infrastructure, Safety and Security, and Medical Services. The large number of stakeholders has presented an opportunity for high-level networking in all sectors of the economy which will result in lasting relationships and a legacy benefit. Just as important, the organizational experience gained will provide a superb foundation for hosting mega-sporting events in the future.

Mr Speaker, in the lead up to May and June, the ACBDA has identified business opportunities for services both on-water and on-land during the event. They are working closely with the Bermuda Economic Development Corporation, the Bermuda Tourism Authority and other community partners to host a number of information sessions from Feb 23rd to March 7th where local businesses and entrepreneurs will be invited to learn about potential commercial opportunities. They will be offered advice and guidance by industry experts.

In December 2016 the ACEA held a casting call for local entertainers who are interested in performing during the event. This was open to any type of entertainment. At the same time, there was a call for auditions to be a member of the official band for the event, known as “The Band”. Auditions were held on the weekend of the 14th and 15th of January. Approximately 50 entertainers auditioned to be a member of The Band. The panel of judges included The Band Musical Director, Mr Robert Edwards and representatives from ACBDA and ACEA. The judges narrowed the pool of contestants to 25 in the categories of female singers, male singers, drummers, guitarists, bassists, keyboardists, percussionists and saxophonists. The public had the opportunity to vote for their favourite contestants to reach the shortlist via a closed ballot on www.acbda.bm. More than 3,000 votes were cast and The Band was announced on 2 February:

- Dave Pitman – Saxophonist
- Jesse Seymour – Male Vocalist
- Torrey Tacklyn – Bassist
- Troy Washington Sr. – Drummer
- Raven Baksh – Female Vocalist/Guitarist
- Leroy Francis – Keyboardist

Mr Speaker, over 800 individuals have expressed an interest in joining the First Mates America’s Cup Volunteer Program sponsored by XL Catlin. Approximately 700 volunteers will be required and interviews for specific areas commenced during the last week of January.

Mr Speaker, the ACEA launched its ticket sales for the event on 9th December 2017 and is offering a significantly reduced rate for local residents. Tickets are available on the ACEA’s website at www.americascup.com. The race schedule and other pertinent information about the event can also be found on the site.

Mr Speaker, I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate three exceptional sailors who will be leading Team Bermuda in the Red Bull Youth America's Cup:

- Skipper - Mackenzie Cooper
- Team Manager - Owen Siese
- Boat Captain - Peter Dill.

The eleven-member Bermuda team is training full-time in their preparations for the Red Bull Youth America's Cup races. Although the team started from scratch, they quickly learned how to master the high-tech art of foiling in their M32 practice boat. They are honing their skills under the supervision of their coaches and with support from Oracle Team USA. I understand they are rapidly becoming a force to be reckoned with. I am sure they will make all Bermudians proud.

Mr Speaker, hosting AC35 cannot be done without the support of our community, businesses and stakeholders. I would like to thank the ACBDA and its board and committee members, government department representatives as well as the ACEA, the teams and all volunteers who have assisted in the AC35 preparation process to date. We have a mammoth task ahead and the next few months will be demanding. I encourage everyone to remain focused and rally together in support of Bermuda during AC35.

Thank you, **Mr Speaker**.