

# All in Place for Smooth Start to New School Year

**MINISTER OF** Education, Youth and Information, Senator the Hon. Ruel Reid, is assuring that all is in place for a smooth start to the new academic year, which officially begins on September 3.



Students go back to school at Old Harbour Primary in St. Catherine.

The Minister, who was addressing a press conference at his National Heroes Circle office in Kingston on August 30, informed that a total of \$8.4 billion, including the Programme of Advancement Through Health and Education (PATH) feeding grant, is being provided to secondary-level institutions for the school year.

He further noted that the disbursement of funds by the Ministry to all secondary

institutions is being maintained at a maximum of \$19,000 per student and special support in selected areas of up to \$11,000 per student.

Senator Reid pointed out that the Government is honouring its commitment to increase funding to primary, all-age and junior high schools with a budget of \$4.2 billion.

Other areas of support include the provision of

Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics programmes, Technical and Vocational Education and Training programmes, curriculum support, and other special requests.

In the meantime, Senator Reid stated that schools have been reminded that the Ministry's non-mandatory policy towards the payment of parents' contribution remains in place.

## Finance Minister Upbeat About Higher Sustainable Growth

FINANCE AND the Public Service Minister, Dr. the Hon. Nigel Clarke, says he is optimistic that Jamaica could be on the way to attaining higher levels of sustainable economic growth.

Speaking at a Statistical Institute of Jamaica (STATIN) media sensitisation seminar at the Terra Nova All-Suite Hotel in St. Andrew on August 30, Dr. Clarke noted that there has been an "increasing trend" in this regard, based on the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) out-turns in the last four fiscal/calendar year quarters.

The Minister said official figures from STATIN show that GDP moved from 0.9 per cent to 1.4 per cent over the initial three quarters, between July 2017 and March 2018.

He added that if the Planning Institute of Jamaica's

(PIOJ) 1.8 per cent estimate for the June 2018 quarter is taken into consideration, subject to STATIN's confirmation, "we have seen an increasing trend... so that's [encouraging]".

Dr. Clarke emphasised, however, that this development does not necessarily guarantee a transition into higher levels of growth, as "we have had increasing trends before that have not continued".

He said that based on factors and indicators, such as the growth in loans and credit extended to the private sector by financial institutions and the absence, to date, of severe weather, which had adversely impacted sectors, such as agriculture, "there is reason to be optimistic".

## Minister of Education, Youth and Information, Senator the Hon. Ruel Reid

"As part of our general preparations, school plants have been renovated, furniture and other equipment have been provided and, most important, the first tranche of operational grants have been sent to our schools in good time to allow for the smooth re-opening of our institutions," he said.

## JCF Launches New Branch to Restore and Maintain Public Order

THE JAMAICA Constabulary Force (JCF) has increased its capacity to improve the safety of citizens, as well as restore and maintain public order, with the launch of its new Public Safety and Traffic Enforcement Branch (PSTEB).

The branch, which is the result of a merger of the motorised patrol and traffic and highway divisions of the JCF, was officially launched during a ceremony at Harman Barracks in Kingston on August 29.

Headquartered in Kingston at the Elletson Road police complex, the branch is expected to result in improved compliance with the Road Traffic Act, reduced crime in public spaces, and increased public support to the JCF.

Speaking at the ceremony, Minister of National Security, Hon. Dr. Horace Chang, said while the initial roll-out of the PSTEB's operations will be in the Corporate Area, St. Catherine and major resort



Minister of National Security, Hon. Dr. Horace Chang (left), inspects some of the newly acquired motorbikes that have been provided for officers of the just-established Public Safety and Traffic Enforcement Branch of the Jamaica Constabulary Force. Occasion was a ceremony held at Harman Barracks in Kingston on August 29.

towns, it will eventually be expanded islandwide.

He noted that members of the branch have been specially trained to engage community members as they carry out their duties to deal with traffic, vending and the general population in public spaces,

"which means their whole approach is somewhat different from the traditional way".

"They have been trained to engage our public in a very positive way and restore not only public safety but build public trust and build public understanding with the police

force as we go forward to ensure that the community, and members of the community will feel safe," he said.

The new branch consists of 700 members who had to undergo training in human rights and situational awareness, among other areas.



Finance and the Public Service Minister, Dr. the Hon. Nigel Clarke (right), shares pleasantries with Statistical Institute of Jamaica (STATIN) Chairman, Professor Alvin Wint (left), and Director General, Carol Coy, on arrival at the Terra Nova All-Suite Hotel in St. Andrew on August 30 for STATIN's media sensitisation seminar.

## Film Industry Contributes \$1.2 B to Local Economy

FILM COMMISSIONER at Jamaica Promotions Corporation (JAMPRO), Renée Robinson, says the local film industry performed remarkably for the 2017/18 financial year, contributing a record \$1.2 billion in film production expenditure to the local economy.

Film production expenditure, which relates to the value of the production budget that comes into the island to offset the services rendered, shows that for the 2017/18 fiscal period, some \$1.2 billion was allocated, up from \$745 million in the previous year, representing a 65 per cent increase.

Miss Robinson pointed out that this was the first time



Film Commissioner at Jamaica Promotions Corporation (JAMPRO), Renée Robinson

the figure had exceeded \$1 billion, noting that the expenditure is the value of the budget that international productions spend in Jamaica.

"So, this would be to hire cast, crew, drivers, rental of equipment, anything that is part of the production process that is being spent in Jamaica," she added.

Some 124 international film productions took place over the period and generated 2,781 jobs.

Miss Robinson explained that the Commission is able to differentiate and segment the types of productions that are shot on the island by tracking through the film registration process.

"Documentary productions led the genres, with 35 documentaries filmed in Jamaica over the period, up from 17 in the previous year, and TV productions followed with 24, up from 15 in 2016/17," the Film Commissioner said.

## NSWMA Saves \$42.5 Million on Fuel Bill

THE NATIONAL Solid Waste Management Authority (NSWMA) is reporting that it is saving \$42.5 million on its fuel bill, due to control measures that were put in place at the agency.

Speaking at a press conference at the Courtleigh Hotel & Suites in New Kingston on August 28, Chairman of the Authority, Dennis Chung, said the NSWMA has made "progress" over the past three years, with both the parent

body and its four regional entities having up-to-date audited financial statements, the first time since 2004.

"We have been able to save from efficiencies within the organisation. It is a significant improvement in the culture of the (Authority), which is very important," Mr. Chung said.

Mr. Chung said that the primary mandate of the Board is to ensure that "proper" corporate governance principles are adhered to at the NSWMA,

and the money saved has facilitated "better" management of the organisation.

"We are here to ensure that we do the best job for the Jamaican people and persons get the best value for the dollar that is spent," the Chairman said.

Meanwhile, Executive Director of the NSWMA, Audley Gordon, said over 80 per cent of the island is "cleansed" of garbage weekly, and that he and his team are committed to improving the agency's service and to be good stewards of public resources.



Chairman of the National Solid Waste Management Authority (NSWMA), Dennis Chung (2nd left), addresses a press conference held at the Courtleigh Hotel & Suites in New Kingston on August 28. Others (from left) are Chairman of the Board's Audit Committee, Norman Gordon; Corporate Governance Chairperson, Camille Facey, and Executive Director, Audley Gordon.

## Summer Interns Awarded by TEF



Tourism Minister, Hon. Edmund Bartlett (centre), with the Top Boy, Jared Braham (left), and Top Girl, Kerone Ross, of the 2018 Tourism Enhancement Fund (TEF) summer internship, at an awards ceremony hosted by TEF at the Courtleigh Auditorium on August 28.